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M.A. Dissertation

# Authentication of *Hadith* on the *Raj'ah*

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**Notes**

(S) and (A) stand for 'peace be upon him and his family' and 'peace be upon him', respectively. They have been used wherever these expressions occur in Arabic texts.

**Abstract**[1]

Scant literature has been written in English on a little-known and often misunderstood Shi'a belief called the *raj'ah*, or the partial resurrection of selected human beings shortly before the final Resurrection. While early Shi'a sources suggest that the Imams spoke of the *raj'ah*, precisely what they taught is less clear since the *hadith* are often unreliable and contradictory. Contemporary authors have also speculated that the *raj'ah* developed as a messianic response to political repression or through synthesis with pre-Islamic Near Eastern beliefs and was not an actual teaching of the Imams.

This dissertation will examine *hadith* narrated from the Prophet Muhammad and the Shi'a Imams through the strength or weakness of their chains of narration (and, to a lesser degree, their content) to postulate which ideas about the *raj'ah* can

[1] Portions of the abstract, introduction, literature review, statement of the problem, and methodology (including some verbatim sections) were submitted in May, 2009 as part of the proposal for this dissertation.

reliably be traced back to the Imams as well as to identify which *hadith* seem to have been counterfeited and possible sources of their corruption.

**Student's Declaration**

I, Amina C. Inloes, declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of Islamic College for Advanced Studies. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the student and in no way represent those of the Islamic College for Advanced Studies. The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

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# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

## Introduction

The primary Islamic religious sources – the Qur'an and *hadith* – provide a complex but occasionally contradictory picture of the events leading up to the end of the world. One of the most controversial topics is the *raj'ah* (also known as the *karrah*), or the return to life of some of the deceased before the actual Resurrection. While Sunni sources have typically dismissed the *raj'ah* as a cross between reincarnation and self-vindication (Muzaffar, 2003), early Shi'a sources suggest that the Imams did prophesise a partial resurrection; this view has persisted until today as a fairly normative Shi'a belief, although not without exception.[2]

While it seems clear that the Imams did mention the *raj'ah*, it is less clear what they actually said. Even Shaykh al-Mufeed (d. 1022 AD) complained about contradictory interpretations of the *raj'ah*:

> The Imamites agree on the necessity of the *raj'a* on earth of a great number of the dead before the day of resurrection. But there is a difference of opinion among them concerning the meaning of *raj'a*. (Sachedina quoting Shakyh al-Mufeed, 1981, p. 67)

The intervening millennium has hardly improved that situation, and these uncertainties are compounded by the fact that, historically, many *ghulat* (extremist to the point of unorthodoxy) Shi'a sects preached the imminent return (*raj'ah*) of various deceased historical personages and also adopted pre-Islamic beliefs (such as reincarnation) under the umbrella of *raj'ah*.

From a normative Shi'a perspective, the *raj'ah* is typically understood as the return of the most faithful and most despicable of humanity. While some authors

[2] This paper will focus on Twelver (Imami) Shi'ism, not other branches of Shi'ism.

debate whether this includes the best and the worst of all humanity, or only those who lived after the Prophet Muhammad (Kohlberg, 1999),[3] *hadith* clearly predict that pre-Islamic individuals will return. (Although both Shiʻa and Sunni Muslims agree that Jesus will return, since he is not considered dead, his return would not fall under the category of *rajʻah*) Generally, it is assumed that the good will be revived to fight for the Mahdi, and the evil will be revived to receive their just due. One or more of the Shiʻa Imams – in particular, Imam al-Husayn – is also prophesised to rise from the dead to rule after the Mahdi passes on.

However, the weaknesses and discrepancies in *hadith* literature suggest that the popular understanding of the *raj'ah* was just as influenced by socio-political factors as it was by the teachings of the Imams. The dire political repression that the Shiʻa were living under must have fomented tales of vengeance, perhaps along the lines of what the historian Ibn Abi al-Hadeed (d. 1258) relates:

> They [the Shiʻa] believe that certain people from the Umayyads and others will be brought back with their very physiques when their awaited Imam comes and that he will amputate hands and feet of many men, gouge out eyes of many, crucify many more, and will take revenge from the enemies of the House of Muhammad… both enemies of the past and enemies who will come in the future. (Al-Majlisi quoting Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, 2003, p. 190)

Since the surviving *rajʻah hadith* mention neither amputation nor crucifixion, it is hard to say whether Ibn Abi al-Hadeed was relating the words of learned religious scholars or simply what he heard on the street.

In either case, such violence does strike some as incongruous, for, during their lifetimes, the Prophet and Imams were renowned for their compassion and generosity. [4] According to the Qur'an, whenever a people disobeyed God, it was

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[3] For instance, in his article in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Kohlberg says that there is 'agreement that the raj`a… will involve believers and unbelievers only from Muhammad's community' (Kohlberg, 1999).
[4] While a *hadith* in *Bihar al-Anwar* (Vol. 53, Hadith #122) does acknowledge this discrepancy, saying that Imam al-Husayn will return and kill so many people that people will say he could not be a descendant of the prophets, this *hadith* is extremely unreliable, as it lacks a full chain of narration, and

God who destroyed them, not His prophets. It seems beneath the dignity of an emissary of God to return to life for the sole purpose of carrying out something akin to a lynching. Furthermore, if God has already promised to dispense justice in the Hereafter, it seems superfluous for Him to resurrect His enemies beforehand – especially only some of them – to meet an earthly punishment which, no matter how chastising, pales before eternal Hellfire. Specific punishments foretold for figures venerated in the Sunni tradition have also raised inter-sectarian ire. Finally, to some, it seems odd that God would return the Mahdi after over a thousand years of hiding for him to rule but briefly and then cede to a previously deceased Imam (Algar, 2005).

### Statement of the Problem

Almost certainly, at least some of the extant *hadith* were misrelated – either intentionally or unintentionally, but probably both – and do not represent the verbatim teachings of the Imams. Therefore, uncovering what the Imams might actually have said requires a careful sifting of the extant *hadith*, as well as attention to who might have derailed these teachings, and why.

### Literature Review

Literature on the *raj'ah* in the English language is relatively scant. Although some works mention *hadith* on the *raj'ah*, they do so quite uncritically. For instance, in his article on the *raj'ah* in the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Amir-Moezzi (2005) accompanies several *hadith* with the premise that there is no such thing as a *ghulat*

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the final narrator who is mentioned, 'Amr ibn Thabit, was condemned by Ibn al-Ghadha'iri as being 'extremely weak'.

belief because, at one time or another, all *ghulat* beliefs were acceptable. While this thesis could be defended for other doctrinal issues, it is problematic when applied to the *raj'ah* due to the *ghulat* interpolation of local religious beliefs. Similarly, both Turner (2000) and Sachedina (1981) devote considerable attention to a gigantic *hadith* from *Bihar al-Anwar* called the Hadith of Mufaddal even though the narrators of that *hadith* enjoyed such stellar reputations as 'liar' and 'corrupter of the faith' (Najjashi, 2004). Of course, for David Cook, the author of *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic,* authenticity of *hadith* is less of an issue as he considers all *hadith* to be inauthentic, and so he quotes copious eschatological *hadith* without concern over their sources (Cook, 2002). While these citations aid in understanding what the Shi'a said about the *raj'ah*, they do not address the basic question of what the Imams themselves actually said. This is a major gap in the scholarship on this issue in the English language that this dissertation will attempt to fill.

Historical sources suggest that the Shi'a were sufficiently identified with the concept of the *raj'ah* – both by themselves and their opponents – for it to be safely seen as an early aspect of Shi'a belief. For instance, they were often disparagingly referred to as '*ahl al-raj'ah'* (Amir-Moezzi, 2005). An oft-quoted *hadith* from Imam al-Sadiq excludes those who do not believe in the *mut'ah* or the *raj'ah* from being true followers of the Imams;[5] unfortunately, this *hadith* cannot be authenticated by the general standards of Islamic scholarship since it lacks a chain of narration. Even if it were authenticated, it still does not pinpoint exactly what is meant by the *raj'ah*.

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[5] 'Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlesi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 53, Hadith #92. While many take that *hadith* at face value and interpret *mut'ah* as 'temporary marriage,' in his exposition on the *raj'ah*, Vahid Majd postulates that '*lam yastahill mat'atana*' refers to the enjoyment of the rule of Ahl al-Bayt, not interpersonal relations, as that would make more contextual sense. (Vahid Majd, 2000) However, the *hadith* itself is found in the section pertaining to temporary marriage in *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah,* and so that probably is the intended meaning, both the *mut'ah* and the *raj'ah* being exclusively Shi'a teachings.

Kohlberg (1999) proffers five answers to that question. First, he defines *raj'ah* as reincarnation (in the Hindu sense). Adopted by a few early *ghulat* sects – such as the Mansuriyyah who held that souls would be returned to other bodies to be punished (Nawbakhti, 2007) – belief in reincarnation persists today in only a handful of Islamic offshoots. Since both early and modern Shi'a scholars have adamantly and unequivocally rejected this belief (Qummi, 1999), it might not even appear worth mentioning, except for the fact that the Shi'a are still accused of stealthily promoting reincarnation under the guise of the *raj'ah* (Sobhani & Kazemi, 2001).

Second, he describes the *raj'ah* as the transfer of a spirit of holiness from Imam to Imam. This belief (again, often associated with the *ghulat*) is more commonly known as *tanasukh* and is a separate doctrinal issue.

Third, he mentions the idea postulated by some early Shi'as who, attempting to appease Mu'tazilite objections, claimed that the *raj'ah* referred to the return of power to the Shi'a, not the actual return of the dead. This view may be of human interest as it proves that ancient peoples were just as apologetic as modern peoples. However, al-Sharif al-Murtadha (11th century AD) rejected that view rather vehemently. Since the article itself says that scholars of that time explicitly rejected this view, and it has no basis in *hadith*, it will not be considered further.

Fourth, he refers to the *raj'ah* as the expectation of the imminent return of deceased personages. This interpretation of the *raj'ah* is often presented as the original belief which later transmuted into the idea of a partial resurrection. While some see a 'proto-*raj'ah*' in 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's assertion that the Prophet had not died and would soon return, the actual doctrine of the *raj'ah* is often attributed not to the Imams but to the Kaysaniyyah who, in the spirit of denial, maintained that Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah had not died but had simply gone into concealment on Mount Radhwa, where he was being nourished by a kindly she-goat. (Of course,

the Kaysaniyyah could have just as easily taken this idea from the Imams.) Although this expectation died away when he failed to materialise in a timely fashion, similar beliefs resurged throughout the all Shiʻa Imamates and can be attributed to the severe political oppression the Shiʻa were living under that, at times, impeded them from identifying the actual Imam (Jafri, 2000). That being said, Twelver Shiʻism does hold that the twelfth Imam – the Mahdi – did go into hiding and will return. However, his return is generally referred to as the *zuhur* (appearance) rather than the *rajʻah* (return) since it involves the return of the living, not the dead.

Fifth, he identifies the *rajʻah* in the normative Shiʻa sense – namely, the partial resurrection; this belief seems most concordant with *hadith* and the writings of the early Shiʻa scholars. Definitely, early Shiʻa scholars upheld belief in a partial resurrection. A vociferous debate was recorded between Shaykh al-Mufeed and a Muʻtazilite opponent who objected that the *rajʻah* was unnecessary (since God had already promised to enact justice) and unpredictable (since the evil could always repent, thereby removing any grounds for punishment) (Al-Mufeed in Sachedina, 1981; McDermott, 1986). Similarly, Shaykh al-Saduq amply defended the idea via *hadith* and the Qur'anic precedent of prior peoples who were raised before.

Numerous *hadith* supporting that fifth definition have been preserved; however, as Shaykh al-Mufeed mentioned, the *hadith* themselves are unreliable and disparate. While some *hadith* predict the return of Imam al-Husayn and his seventy-two companions, others predict the return of the Prophet Muhammad and the remaining Shiʻite Imams – or even twelve more Mahdis who will rule one after another. *Hadith* alternatively predict the *rajʻah* occurring before, during, and after the *zuhur* – or even more than one *rajʻah* (Kohlberg, 1999). While Sachedina ascribes some of these differences in *hadith* to *bada'*, or the change in God's will (Sachedina, 1981), it is more likely that these differences actually stem from misunderstandings or fabrications of *hadith*.

Rather than focusing on *hadith*, contemporary works often present the *raj'ah* as an outgrowth of socio-historical circumstances, with or without the blessing of the Imams. Some attribute this belief to contemporaneous Near Eastern religious traditions. Cook traces much of Islamic eschatology back to Jewish sources, which he speculates that popular preachers of the time – both Sunni and Shi'a – copied to embellish eschatological tales, and these embellishments were later canonised (Cook, 2002). In contrast, Anne-Marie Schimmel equates the *raj'ah* with the pagan Arab myth of the 'return of the hero' (Schimmel, 1994, p. 195), as does Lane (Sachedina, 1981, n. 32). The idea of the *raj'ah* has also been attributed to 'Abdullah ibn Saba, the legendary (and probably fictional) founder of the heterodox sect of the Saba'iyyah. On the other hand, Amir-Moezzi leaves no stone unturned and proposes roots of the *raj'ah* (and the *zuhur* in general) in Jewish, Christian, gnostic, Mazdaean, Manichean, and pagan beliefs (Amir-Moezzi, 1995). However, unlike the above authors, he does not deny that the *raj'ah* could also have been an original teaching of the Imams.

Others see it as a later development of Shi'a belief. Since the *zuhur* and *raj'ah* were sometimes blurred, Sachedina concludes that belief in the *raj'ah* was a gradual outgrowth of messianic beliefs rather than an endemic teaching of the Imams. He cites the dire circumstances of the Shi'a as fostering messianic hopes (Sachedina, 1981).[6] While Turner also pegs the *raj'ah* as a second or third century *hijri* development, he speculates that 'Allamah Majlesi, the compiler of *Bihar al-Anwar*, propagated this idea to 'externalise' Islamic belief and make it 'imamocentric' by de-emphasizing universal justice in favour of justice for the Shi'a (Turner, 2000). Although he does not accuse 'Allamah Majlesi of fabricating this 'external

[6] For more information regarding the conditions of the Shi'a at that time, see *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam* (Hussain, 1982).

imamocentrism', he does suggest that 'Allamah Majlesi took extra care to find *hadith* about the *raj'ah* to bolster the legitimacy of the Safavid Shi'a state.

Unlike the other authors cited above, Turner does broach the subject of whether or not the *hadith* are reliable and suggests that many of them are not. However, he does not pursue this line of inquiry and, in fact, credits a Shi'a cleric with helping him understand that Shi'a ulama do not investigate the sources of belief in the *raj'ah* because, were it disproved, it would interfere with belief in the Mahdi or with modern religio-political sentiments (Turner, 2006). This theory, however, does not make sense since the return of the Mahdi does not depend on the return of the dead.

Despite Turner's intriguing theory of intentional clerical blindsightedness, modern Shi'a scholars hailing from the seminary tradition generally have taken a more source-based approach. Many scholars, such as the late Ayatollah Gulpaygani (2000) and Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani (Sobhani & Kazemi, 2001), present the *raj'ah* as a basic tenet of the Shi'a faith; a more liberal view is presented by Muzaffar (2003), who considers it authentic but not compulsory. Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadhlullah, whose views often differ from the traditional, has declared it unknowable on the grounds of the unreliability of the *hadith* and has left the matter to be determined at the end of the world.[7] However, some modern Shi'a thinkers have opposed it on philosophical or logical grounds (Amir-Moezzi, 2005).

Otherwise, modern Shi'a religious scholarship resembles early Shi'a religious scholarship on this issue. For instance, in the anonymous book *Al-Raj'ah aw al-'Awdatu ba'd al-Hayat al-Dunya* (n.d.), the author presents the traditional justification of the *raj'ah* from Qur'anic precedent, *hadith*, and so on. Commonly recited religious texts – such as *Du'a al-'Ahd* and *Ziyarat al-Jami'ah al-Kabeerah* – which refer to the

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[7] The views of Ayatollah Fadhlullah can be found at http://www.bayynat.org.lb.

*raj'ah* are also cited as evidence of this belief. Although transmitted and evaluated similarly to *hadith*, these texts enjoy a different status since, unlike arcane works of *hadith*, they are commonly read on a popular basis and can be said to have had more of a grassroots impact.

**Research Questions**

As evinced by the above, the main uncertainties regarding the *raj'ah* centre on the reliability of *hadith*. Therefore, this dissertation will focus on analysing the surviving *hadith* in order to suggest the actual teachings of the Imams on the *raj'ah*, sans socio-historic or pre-Islamic influences. This main question introduces the following subquestions:

1) What does the Shi'a *hadith* corpus say about the *raj'ah*?
2) Of the above, what concepts and details can reliably be traced back to the Imams? Which appear to be forgeries?
3) Are there any particular individuals, sects, socio-political trends, or contemporaneous religious beliefs that could explain discrepancies between (1) and (2)?

**Methodology**

The first step to understanding the *raj'ah* according to the Imams is to gather the surviving *hadith*. Fortunately, 'Allamah Majlesi enthusiastically carried out that task when he compiled *Kitab al-Raj'ah* (the *Book of the Raj'ah*) in his encyclopaedic *hadith* work, *Bihar al-Anwar*. This section of *Bihar al-Anwar* contains almost 200 *hadith*

pertaining to the *raj'ah*, including *tafsir hadith* and quotations from *ziyarat*.[8] It is reasonable to assume that he collected the strongest surviving Shi'a *hadith* on the *raj'ah* since all the literature surveyed cited *Kitab al-Raj'ah* (or the sources listed in *Kitab al-Raj'ah*) almost exclusively. Therefore, *Kitab al-Raj'ah* will be assumed to contain most of the reliable *raj'ah hadith*, and other sources will not be consulted.

The *hadith* will then be analysed in terms of narrator.[9] The greatest challenge here is to identify the narrators properly since many names are given in abbreviated forms which are commonly shared, such as 'Ibrahim' or 'Abu Ali'; narrators with the same name will be distinguished based on whom they were known to have narrated from and who was known to have narrated from them as listed in *Mu'jam al-Rijal* by Ayatollah Khoei. They will also be distinguished based on the time periods they were known to have been alive. Then, traditional Shi'a books on *hadith* narrators will be used to categorise them according to the following scheme:[10]

> **Praised:** Praised by all biographers who mention them. May include narrators who were criticised in *hadith* which Ayatollah Khoei determined as weak.
> **Mostly praised**: Praised by most biographers but criticised by Ibn al-Ghadha'iri, or heavily praised by most biographers but criticised by a

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[8] Although *Kitab al-Raj'ah* only has 163 listings, entry #138 contains 22 *hadith*. Additionally, some listings contain more than one distinct *hadith* or more than one chain of narration for the same *hadith*, and so, for the purposes of this study, they have been treated as more than separate *hadith*. Multiple hading under one listing have been identified as #1a, #1b, etc. The *hadith* composing entry #138 have been identified as #138-1, #138-2, etc. All in all, this leads to a total of 192 *hadith.*

[9] Database technology will be used to facilitate this analysis. Using Microsoft Access, database cards will be made for each *hadith*, with fields for each narrator as well as the content. Check boxes will be provided for common themes (such as the length of the rule of the Mahdi or the rise of the Beast) to aid in sorting *hadith* by topic.

[10] Including the *Rijal* of Najjashi, the *Rijal* of Tusi, the *Rijal* of Ibn al-Ghadha'iri, *Al-Khulasah* by 'Allamah al-Hilli, and *Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith* by Ayatollah Khoei; the *Dirayah al-Noor* software, which contains searchable electronic versions of all these books, will be used where appropriate.

biographer other than Ibn al-Ghadha'iri.[11] This category also includes narrators who were considered to be reliable but known to be not Imami.[12] (Although many narrators who are not Imami are still accepted, the *raj'ah* was viewed differently by different sects and, as such, as is more sensitive to variations in belief than, say, how the Imam performed his ablutions. Therefore, although non-Imami narrators will not be rejected, their sectarian affiliations will be noted.)

**Disagreed over**: Significant disagreement over reliability of narrator by biographers.

**Unreliable**: Condemned by all biographers who mention the narrator. Also includes those narrators who were praised by some but significantly condemned by Najjashi, or those whom Ayatollah Khoei deemed unreliable.

**Unknown**: No biographical information available about the narrator.

It will also be recorded whether a particular narrator was said to be of the Imami, Waqifi, Fathi, Khattabi, Zaydi, Nawusi, or non-Shi'a persuasions;[13] whether or not the narrator had any particular merits; and – most importantly for this work – whether the narrator was considered to have had any particular demerits, such as

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[11] Since Ibn al-Ghadha'iri is very critical, his opinion is being treated separately.

[12] That is to say, they were not members of the Twelver Shi'a sect. However, it would be erroneous to refer to them as Twelver Shi'as here, since not all twelve Imams had been born yet.

[13] The Waqifis held that the final Imam was Imam Musa al-Kadhim and that, rather than dying, he had been raised to heaven and would be returned when it was time to lead an uprising. The Fathis held that 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq (instead of Imam Musa al-Kadhim) was the Imam after Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. The Khattabis held that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq had appointed a man name Abu al-Khattab as the next Imam. The Zaydis fell into a number of subsects and held that the Imamate belonged to whichever of Imam Ali's descendants actively sought rule. The Nawusis held that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq did not die and would not die until he revolted (Nawbakhi, 2007).

being a liar, extremist (*ghali*), forgetful, or inclined to relate from weak (*dha'eef*) narrators.[14]

After that has been completed, the *hadith* will be categorised into the following categories based on their chains of narration:

**Very strong**: All narrators are known and praised and recorded to have reported from each other. No gaps in the chain of narration. *Hadith in this category will be considered to have been traced very reliably to the Imams.*

**Strong:** Almost all narrators are known. Known narrators are praised or mostly praised, and almost all narrators are recorded to have reported from each other. No known weak or suspicious narrators. No gaps in the chain of narration. *Hadith in this category will be considered to have been traced reliably to the Imams.*

**Average:** No narrators have been identified as unreliable or disagreed over; however, concerns have been raised about certain narrators. Many narrators may be unknown. May contain minor gaps in an otherwise acceptable chain of narration.[15] *Hadith in this category will be considered to be potentially reliable.*

**Suspect:** Presence of narrators whom scholars disagree over. May also contain gaps. Includes *hadith* where only the primary narrator is mentioned, and he is disagreed upon. *Hadith in this category will be considered unproven, but with a greater possibility of being authentic than the 'unreliable' hadith.*

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[14] Throughout this work, 'weak' has been used in its technical sense to denote a narrator who was unreliable in relating *hadith*. Similarly, 'extremist' has been used in its technical sense to refer to a member of the *ghulat* sects.

[15] Although, traditionally, *hadith* with gaps in their chain of narration are considered weak, for the purposes of this analysis, *hadith* with gaps in their chain of narration but no known unreliable narrators will be distinguished from *hadith* with gaps in their chain of narration and with known unreliable narrators in order to facilitate identification of possible falsifications.

**Unreliable:** Presence of at least one narrator who has been condemned by all biographers who have mentioned him. May also have gaps. Includes *hadith* where only the primary narrator has been mentioned, and he has been universally condemned. Also includes *hadith* with other issues of concern (such as the improbability of the primary narrator having had contact with the person he was narrating from). *Hadith in this category will be considered to be unproven. Some may be considered as potential forgeries.*

**Very unreliable:** Presence of at least two narrators who have been condemned by all biographers who have discussed them, particularly those condemned for lying or extremism. May also have gaps. *All hadith in this category will be considered to be unproven and will be considered as potential forgeries.*

**Indeterminate:** No chain of narration, or *hadith* with an insufficient number of narrators listed to categorise it into any of the above categories. *No immediate judgment will be made about hadith in this category.*

*Hadith* which have been related by particularly renowned narrators (such as Ibn Abi 'Umayr, al-Bazanti, and Safwan ibn Yahya)[16] or which have been related from particularly reliable sources (such as *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih*) may be moved up to higher categories, but not into 'very strong'. *Hadith* which have been related by narrators known as the 'People of Consensus (*ashab al-ijma'*) may also be moved up into higher categories, but not into 'very strong'. *Hadith* which contain multiple issues of concern may be moved down to lower categories, but not into 'very unreliable'. *Hadith* with suspect content but without flaws in their chain of narration will be noted.

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[16] These three narrators are considered reliable when narrating *hadith* without full chains of narration (Al-Fadli, 2002).

Just because a *hadith* was related by unreliable narrators does not automatically mean it is a fabrication. However, unreliable *hadith* will be examined by their narrators and content and compared against the more reliable *hadith* to suggest which prophesies might be forgeries.

*Hadith* which have been identified as 'average' and better will then be used to propose teachings about the *raj'ah* that appear, from the perspective of the reliability of *hadith* narrators, to be traceable to the Imams; this is the primary goal of this thesis. Patterns regarding the narrators or sources will be noted.

A list of narrators considered unreliable and the reasons why can be found in Appendix C. A list of *hadith* and their categorizations can be found in Appendix D.

# CHAPTER 2: THE SOURCES AND NARRATORS

### The *Hadith* Sources

A disproportionate number of *hadith* on the *raj'ah* (72 out of 192) originate from a relatively obscure, although not maligned book called *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* by Shaykh Hasan ibn Sulayman, a student of Al-Shaheed al-Thani.[17] *Tafsir 'Ali ibn Ibrahim* is the second most plentiful source, supplying thirty-two *hadith*, only twelve of which have chains of narration. *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* and *Tafsir 'Ali ibn Ibrahim* are the only sources with 'very strong' *raj'ah hadith*.

The remaining *hadith* are scattered among a plethora of other sources, many of which offer only one or two *hadith*. Only a handful of *hadith* come from the collections considered most authentic; namely, *Al-Kafi*, *Man La Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih*, *Tahdheeb al-Ahkam*, and *Al-Istibsar* as well as *Kitab al-Ghaybah* by Al-Nu'mani, and *Kitab al-Ghaybah* by Al-Tusi. However, despite their renowned sources, many of these *hadith* have particularly weak chains of narration; in fact, one of the *hadith* from *Al-Kafi* has, arguably, the worst chain of narration in all of *Kitab al-Raj'ah*.[18] Many of these *hadith* also offer little content, and several are simply quotations of *ziyarat*.

As for why the most renowned *hadith* scholars chose only to include these truncated, problematic *hadith* in lieu of others, there are a couple possibilities. The lesser possibility is that they did not have access to the other *hadith*; this seems unlikely given the variety of other sources that they appear in. The greater possibility is that they themselves considered these *hadith* unreliable. Identifying which material they might have had access to but chose not to include would

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[17] Biographical information taken from *Mukhtasar al-Basa'ir* (Al-Hilli, 2005 [15th century AD]).
[18] This *hadith*, Hadith #103, has been quoted in the next chapter.

provide another clue as to which *hadith* can be reliably traced to the Imams; however, it will not be the subject of this analysis.[19]

In general, no one source dominates *hadith* on any particular topic; rather, the number of *hadith* per topic is roughly proportional to the number of *hadith* from that source. (Exceptions have been noted) For instance, *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* supplies 37% of the *hadith* in *Kitab al-Raj'ah* and 38% of the *hadith* on the return of Imam al-Husayn. Therefore, most topics cannot be traced a single compiler.

A chart of the *hadith* from different sources and their relative reliability can be found in Appendix B.

**Common Narrators: Reliable *Hadith***

However, the sources and narrators of the reasonably verifiable *hadith* (that is to say, 'average' and better) are a different matter, as they are dominated almost exclusively by *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn Abi al-Khattab and Ibn 'Isa.[20] The remaining *hadith* come mostly from Ibn Abi 'Umayr.

A breakdown of the paths of narration of the *hadith* per category is as follows:

**Very strong *hadith***

*Muntakhab al-Basa'ir:*

- 5 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn Abi Al-Khattab and Ibn 'Isa together (or, in one case, the two sons of Ibn 'Isa)
- 2 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn Abi al-Khattab (without Ibn 'Isa)
- 1 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn 'Isa (without Ibn Abi al-Khattab)

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[19] I am indebted to M. Samiei for a long discussion on this point.
[20] Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abi Khalaf, Husayn ibn Abi al-Khattab al-Zayyat, and Ahmad ibn 'Isa al-Ash'ari al-Qummi.

*Tafsir 'Ali ibn Ibrahim:*

- 4 *hadith* from the father of 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, 3 of which are related through Ibn Abi 'Umayr

**Strong *hadith***

*Muntakhab al-Basa'ir*:

- 4 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn 'Isa
- 2 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn Abi Al-Khattab
- 3 *hadith* through other chains of narration

*Amali al-Saduq*:

- 1 *hadith* transmitted from Ibn 'Isa

*Kamil al-Ziyarah*:

- 1 *hadith* related through Ibn Abi 'Umayr

*Al-Kafi*, *Kitab al-Ghaybah* by Shaykh Tusi, and *Majalis al-Mufeed* each also contribute 1 *hadith* with unrelated chains of narration.[21]

**Average *hadith***

*Muntakhab al-Basa'ir:*

- 3 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn Abi al-Khattab
- 2 *hadith* from Sa'd through Ibn 'Isa
- 5 *hadith* reproduced from a book called *Kitab Ta'weel Ma Nuzzila min al-Qur'an fi al-Nabi wa Alihi (S)*
- 2 *hadith* with other chains of narration

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[21] Although the *hadith* in *Amali al-Saduq* and *Al-Kafi* share Al-Saffar as a narrator, he does not narrate any other *raj'ah hadith*.

5 *hadith*, 4 of which are quotations of *ziyarat*, are also included from other books.

Since *Al-Basa'ir*, the source book of *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir,* is attributed to Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abi Khalaf, it is natural that he would relate so many *hadith* in it.[22] However, while none of these individuals is known to be unreliable, and in fact Ibn Abi 'Umayr is considered to be extremely reliable (Al-Fadli, 2002), the fact that most of the material comes from these two paths does give some pause for thought. The authenticity of *hadith* on the *raj'ah* is, in essence, dependent on the reliability and good judgment of these four individuals. Had Sa'd not transmitted this material or had 'Allamah Majlesi not had *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir*, modern Shi'a beliefs regarding the *raj'ah* might have been very different.

### Common Narrators: Unreliable *Hadith*

Over thirty narrators were identified as unreliable. However, as can be seen in the chart in Appendix C, no one of them narrated any significant number of *hadith*, and most only narrated one *hadith.* Nonetheless, some specific ideas can still be traced to specific personages, as will be seen in the next chapter. Additionally, as a whole, unreliable narrators dominated *hadith* on certain topics, such as vengeance.

Just as Sa'd played a strong role in narrating 'strong' *hadith*, he also played a strong role in narrating unreliable *hadith*, as he related about half of the 'very unreliable' *hadith* and a quarter of the 'unreliable' *hadith*. Since – as will be seen – the content of many 'unreliable' *hadith* differs sharply from the more reliable *hadith*, it is not clear whether he passed them on because he agreed with their content or had

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[22] The author of *Mukhtasar al-Basa'ir* says that, according to Al-Iffindi, Sa'd transcribed the material in *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* but not necessarily the material in *Al-Basa'ir.* In any case, he is still associated with *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* (Al-Hilli, 2005 [15th century AD]).

other reasons to believe they were authentic. However, the remaining unreliable *hadith* come through different narrators and from a variety of different sources.

# Chapter 3: The Lack of a Reliable Narrative

Apart from the fact that *Kitab al-Raj'ah* contains far too much material to summarise here, it is quite difficult to organise the *hadith* into a coherent narrative (although both Sachedina (1981) and Turner (2000) have made valiant attempts to do so) since many of the *hadith* contradict. In particular, the reliable *hadith* tend to be short and lack sequence clues indicating any sort of a time frame.

**The Narrative Hadith**

Seven *hadith* stand out as 'narrative *hadith*' – that is, they describe the logical progression of more than one future event. They are also significantly longer than the other *hadith*. While it may be tempting to refer to these *hadith* for some sort of narrative sequence, all of them are 'unreliable' or 'very unreliable' and, therefore, contribute an unfair share of unreliable material into the narrative, especially where they contradict the shorter but more frequently repeated 'reliable' *hadith*.

Three of the seven narrative *hadith* are related from Sahl ibn Ziyad,[23] whom Najjashi calls 'weak' and 'extremist' and whom Ibn al-Ghadha'iri calls 'corrupt of faith.'[24] His presence in these chains of narration is particularly relevant as he is the final narrator to be listed. Apart from these *hadith*, he also narrated other lengthy narrative-style *hadith* outside of *Kitab al-Raj'ah*, thus indicating that he might have had an eye (or ear) for story-like *hadith* (or, perhaps, was simply verbose).[25] Since the *raj'ah hadith* that he relates contain fantastic predictions not supported by the other

[23] His narrative *hadith* are #52, #102, #103.
[24] To reduce the need for citations, all biographical information has been summarised in Appendix C.
[25] See, for example, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 44, p. 142 and vol. 45, p. 80.

*hadith*,[26] it is possible that he might have applied his own dramatic flair to the content he was narrating.

However, he does not appear to be the primary source of falsification, as he generally narrates from some very unreliable narrators whose names appear more associated with the ideas that he narrates. For instance, he relates a fantastical battle *hadith* from ʻAbdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami, who relates fantastical *hadith* elsewhere.[27] While Sahl ibn Ziyad may (or may not) have embellished certain content, he probably did not originate it.

**The Hadith of Mufaddal**

One *hadith* does offer more 'sequence clues', and that is the long *hadith* related by Mufaddal (of which Majlesi mercifully includes only 39 pages) which ʻAllamah Majlesi places right before *Kitab al-Rajʻah*. As with the other narrative *hadith* – which pale in comparison – it may be tempting to refer to this *hadith* to put the *rajʻah* prophecies in order. However, any reliance on this *hadith* should be avoided – primarily because there is little evidence that Mufaddal actually narrated it himself.[28] It reads much more like a catechism than a *hadith*, with Mufaddal asking the right questions in the right order to construct an essay composed of a patchwork of material related in reliable and unreliable *hadith*. Not only is this the only *rajʻah* *hadith* that ʻAllamah Majlesi does not provide a source for, saying only that he took it from 'some of the collections of our companions', the chain of narrators includes an

[26] His *hadith* are quoted in the next chapter.
[27] ʻAbdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami narrates both Hadith #103, which describes the return of the companions of Imam al-Husayn (quoted subsequently in the section on the return of Imam al-Husayn) and Hadith #12, which describes a great battle between the Prophet and the Satan (quoted subsequently in the section on the return of the Prophet). However, Sahl ibn Ziyad only relates the first one.
[28] Turner also maintains that Mufaddal did not relate the other long *hadith* ascribed to him, such as the Tradition of the Myrobean Fruit (Turner, 2006).

agreed-upon extremist (‘Umar ibn Furat) and an agreed-upon ‘liar of corrupt faith’ (Al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khaseebi) whom both ‘Allamah Hilli and Ibn al-Ghadha’iri specifically advise people not to refer to.[29] All this is aside from the fact that some scholars consider Mufaddal himself to be controversial and to have held extremist views (Turner, 2006).

Unlike most *hadith* in *Kitab al-Raj‘ah*, however, the Hadith of Mufaddal displays glaringly extremist (*ghulat*) material. First, it asserts the idea – which Turner (2006) calls ‘quasi-Christological’ – that the Prophet will bear all the sins of the Shi‘a.[30] While Shi‘a *hadith* do support the idea of intercession, this idea does sound strikingly Christian. Since many extremist beliefs were fostered through religious syncretism, this idea most likely entered in from outside Islam.

Second, while the subsequent *hadith* only allude to vengeance against the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt, this *hadith* alone describes a violent and gruesome punishment for the resurrected first two caliphs.[31] Not only are they exhumed, hung from a tree, resurrected, and burnt, but they are tried for all the sins of mankind, beginning with the murder of Abel – in contrast to the Qur’anic verse which says that no person will be responsible for the sins of another (53:58), as well as common sense. This marked vindictiveness is another hallmark of the extremist sects, which formed in a time of deep repression of all of the Shi‘a.

Therefore, the Hadith of Mufaddal can be useful as a theological document explicating the beliefs of extremist Shi‘a sects. It can also be useful as an anthropological document reflecting the Shi‘a outlook of the time. Portions of it may even be partially or wholly authentic. However, it cannot be relied upon at all while attempting to trace the actual teachings of the Imams.

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[29] All biographical information pertaining to the narrators has been listed in Appendix C.

[30] In *Bihar al-Anwar,* the commentator includes a note that this was an extremist (*ghulat*) belief (Majlesi, 2005, vol. 53, p. 23).

[31] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 53, p. 12-14.

**Common Themes**

Therefore, given the lack of a narrative framework, the *raj'ah hadith* will be analysed by theme, rather than as a complete narrative. The following themes recur most prominently throughout the *hadith* and frequently overlap:

- The return of Imam al-Husayn
- The return of Amir al-Mu'mineen
- The return of the Prophet Muhammad
- The return of all the Imams
- The return of non-prophetic individuals
- Places and times
- Purposes of the *raj'ah*

These topics will be addressed in order. Appendix A includes a chart indicating the frequency of these topics as well as the reliability of the *hadith* discussing them.

## Chapter 4: The Prophecies

**The Return of Imam al-Husayn**

The return of Imam al-Husayn is one of the most emphasised themes in *Kitab al-Raj'ah.* Although more *hadith* refer to the return of his father, Amir al-Mu'mineen,[32] the strongest hadith predict that Imam al-Husayn will return first. *Ziyarat* texts – including the only 'strong' one included in *Kitab al-Raj'ah*[33] – also emphasise the return of Imam al-Husayn, even though they refer to the return of other Imams as well.

However, what Imam al-Husayn will do when he returns is a vastly more controversial question. The moderately verifiable hadith ('average' and above) only say that he will return and rule until his eyebrows droop (presumably, from age).[34] No mention is made of him fighting.

In contrast, the 'unreliable' and 'very unreliable' *hadith* spin elaborate tales of him returning to slay his enemies and the enemies of the Shi'a. One of the 'very unreliable' *hadith* – related from Sahl ibn Ziyad – exemplifies this genre. In it, Sahl ibn Ziyad recounts a speech that Imam al-Husayn is said to have made to his companions before they were martyred in Karbala. Of course, it goes without saying that this speech was never recorded in any mainstream history books, even though the Battle of Karbala is one of the most documented events in Islamic history. Since this *hadith* – as the others – has not yet been published in English translation, it is worth including here, if only as a sample of the unreliable narratives:

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[32] 'Amir al-Mu'mineen' (or 'The Commander of the Faithful') is an honorific title commonly used for Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. Since it occurs frequently in these *hadith*, it has been used throughout to refer to Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.
[33] Hadith #116.
[34] See Hadith #1 and #19 for 'very strong' *hadith* expressing these ideas.

The Messenger of Allah said to me: '… You will be martyred here along with your companions, but you will not feel the heat of the iron.' Then he recited: 'O Fire, be coolness and safety for Abraham.'[35] The fighting will be cool and peaceful for you. Then rejoice, for, by God, when they have killed us, we will return to our Prophet. Then, I will remain as long as God wills, and so I will be the first whom the Earth splits open for. I will rise, and I will remain as long as God wills. Then Amir al-Mu'mineen will rise, and the Qa'im. From near God, a contingent from the Heavens will descend that has never descended to the Earth before. Jibra'il and Mika'il and Israfil and armies of angels will be sent down. Muhammad and 'Ali and I and my brother and all of those whom God has blessed will be sent down in waves after waves of forces of the Lord, [and] a horse of light, which none of the Creation has ridden before.

Then the Prophet will raise his banner and defend it for the Qa'im with his sword. Then, as God brings to be, by His will, from behind the Mosque of Kufa, God will cause two springs to flow, one of oil and one of milk.

Then Amir al-Mu'mineen will defend the Prophet with his sword and summon me to the East and the West. I will not meet any enemy without shedding his blood, and I will break the idols until I reach India and conquer it.

Daniel and Joshua will rise with Amir al-Mu'mineen, and they will fight. God and His Messenger have spoken the truth. God will raise seventy men from Basra to fight with them, and He will raise a group to go to Rome, which they will conquer.

Then I will slay every creature whose flesh God has forbidden, until only pleasantness remains upon the Earth. I will come to the Jews and Christians and those of other faiths and give them a choice: either Islam or the sword. I will bestow generously upon those who become Muslim, but I will burn the blood of those who hate Islam.

No man from our Shi'a will remain without God sending down an angel to caress his face and to acquaint him with his wives and his status in Heaven. No blind or crippled or suffering person will remain on Earth without God taking away their suffering through us, Ahl al-Bayt.

Then, blessings will be sent down from the sky to the Earth until the trees are overwhelmed with the fruit that God has ordained for them. Summer fruits will be eaten in winter, and winter fruits will be eaten in summer. This is God's promise: 'If the People of the Book had only believed, we would have sent them blessings from the Heavens and the Earth, but since they disbelieved, we took them to account for what they were doing.'[36]

Then, God will give our Shi'a a miraculous honour by which nothing on Earth will be hidden from them, so that if a man wants to know something about a member of his family, he will be informed of the knowledge that he had hitherto not known.[37]

The extremist themes in this *hadith* are obvious – forces from the Heavens, the Imam slaying all unclean beasts and all those who oppose him (although, in a much more commonly accepted *hadith*, the Imam said to have described the merits of bringing

[35] Qur'an 21:69. Qur'anic translations adapted from the famous translation by Yusufali (1999) in favour of the literal meaning of some of the verses.
[36] Qur'an 7:96.
[37] Hadith #52. All *hadith* translations composed by A. Inloes as literally as semantically possible.

water to a thirsty dog, not slaughtering it). What comes through most poignantly, however, is not the violence or exaggeration, but, rather, the promises at the end. Prosperity, sovereignty, succour, knowledge, and honour – these are the very things the Shi'a of that time were so desperately lacking. Many must have been wondering when the divine aid would come. *Hadith* like this, which promise the good end, are sharp reminders of the difficulties they must have been living in. Thus, it is no surprise that they were circulated. Nonetheless, despite their comforting value, they cannot be traced back to the Imams.

*The Most Unreliable Chains of Narration in Kitab al-Raj'ah*

Similar extremist themes recur in two *hadith* which are distinguished by having the worst chains of narration in *Kitab al-Raj'ah.* The first chain begins with four narrators who were condemned by all biographers who mentioned them:[38]

> **Imam al-Sadiq -> Yunus ibn Zhibyan** (a 'confused' extremist who spread weak *hadith*, whom Ibn al-Ghadha'iri specifically says not to refer to) **-> Al-Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Minqari** (who spread weak and 'strange and unestablished' *hadith*) **-> 'Abdullah ibn Qasim al-Hadhrami** (an extremist Waqifi liar who spread weak *hadith* and narrated from extremists) **-> Musa ibn Su'dan** (an extremist who spread weak *hadith*) **-> Ibn Abi al-Khattab -> Sa'd**.

Despite such a glorious introduction, this *hadith* merely asserts that Imam al-Husayn will carry out the accounting of human beings in the *raj'ah* as Imam 'Ali will do in the Hereafter. While this idea would be compatible with extremist beliefs (and undoubtedly was compatible with the extremist beliefs of some of the narrators

[38] Hadith #13. See Appendix C for references regarding the *hadith* narrators.

listed above), it does not fall outside of the theoretical bounds of normative Shi'ism as long as the Imams are considered to be acting under the orders of God.

The other distinguished *hadith*, however, resembles the 'very unreliable' *hadith* from Sahl ibn Ziyad much more closely; perhaps that is because it is also related from Sahl ibn Ziyad. Although it comes from the relatively reliable book of *Al-Kafi*, its chain of narration is even worse than the preceding one, as it consists of the following individuals who (other than Imam al-Sadiq and Al-Asim) were condemned by all the biographers who mentioned them:[39]

> **Imam al-Sadiq -> 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Batal** (an extremist Waqifi liar who spread weak *hadith*) **-> [Ibraheem] al-Asim** (no information) **-> [Muhammad ibn al-Hasan] Ibn Shimun** (a liar and 'corrupter of the faith' who spread weak *hadith* and who first became a Waqifi and then a 'pillar of extremism', about whom Ibn al-Ghadha'iri says, 'Do not refer to him or anything associated with him') **-> Sahl ibn Ziyad** (whom some identified as a weak extremist liar of corrupt faith) **-> an unidentified group of people.**

What might a sequence of corrupted extremist Waqifi liars relate? First, they engage in *tafsir* (or, rather, *ta'weel*) of the Qur'an, explaining how verses criticising the misdeeds of Bani Isra'il really refer to the murder of Imam Ali, the treaty of Imam Hasan, and the murder of Imam al-Husayn. Then, the hadith describes how the Qur'an predicts the raising of the people to take vengeance for the blood of Imam al-Husayn. After that, it continues in characteristic narrative style:

> 'Then We returned for you a Return (*karrah*) against them'[40] is the emergence of al-Husayn (A) with 70 of his companions. They will have golden helms. Each helm will have two faces. They will announce to the people that this is al-Husayn and he has risen, so that none of the believers shall doubt, and that he is not the Dajjal or the Satan.[41] The Qa'im – the Hujjah – will be among them. When recognition is clear in the hearts of the believers that he

[39] Hadith #103. Names in [square brackets] were not present in the original text of the *hadith* and were inferred.
[40] Qu'ran 17:6.
[41] The Dajjal is akin to the Antichrist.

> is al-Husayn (A), the Hujjah will die, and al-Husayn ibn ʻAli (A) will wash him and shroud him and lay him in his grave, as only a divine successor can do that for a divine successor.[42]

The idea that only a divine successor can bury a divine successor is found in other Shiʻa *hadith*, such as *hadith* relating to the Battle of Karbala (Al-Muqarram, 2005, n.921). The idea that Imam al-Husayn might outlive the Mahdi could also be inferred from the 'very strong' *hadith* which predicts that he will rule until his eyebrows droop. However, only this *hadith* and another *hadith* without a chain of narration predict that he will actually bury the Mahdi.[43] Therefore, while this idea does not contradict any established predictions, it cannot be confirmed. Given the lack of credence of those who were relating it, it should not be included in *rajʻah* narratives.

*The Return of the Companions of Imam al-Husayn*

Similarly, the specific return of the companions of Imam al-Husayn is not directly supported. While they may be prophesised to return on the grounds that all true believers will be returned,[44] no reliable *hadith* describe their return. Only three *hadith* mention them at all: the above *hadith* (already sufficiently maligned), a *hadith* with only one narrator who himself was considered a liar and an extremist,[45] and another *hadith* with only the primary narrator listed. This latter *hadith* prophesises a re-enactment of the entire Battle of Karbala, only with the Imam victorious;[46] this prophecy closely resembles some of the unreliable, extremist-oriented *hadith* – in particular, a *hadith* that predicts the re-enactment of the Battle of Siffin.[47]

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[42] Hadith #103.
[43] The other *hadith* is #130a.
[44] See below, under 'The return of non-prophetic individuals'.
[45] Hadith #89, related from Salih ibn Sahl.
[46] Hadith #78, related from Salih ibn Sahl.
[47] Hadith #75, quoted under the section on the return of Amir al-Mu'mineen.

While, again, no reliable *hadith* contradict the prophecy of the return of the companions of Imam al-Husayn, no reliable *hadith* support it, either. Therefore, while this prophecy may in fact be ascribed to the Imams, it also should not be included in the *raj'ah* narrative.

**The Return of Amir al-Mu'mineen**

In contrast to the reliable *hadith* which portray Imam al-Husayn returning as a civil leader, the reliable *hadith* about Amir al-Mu'mineen portray him returning as a warrior. In a rather non-extremist-sounding *hadith*, Imam Al-Baqir advises Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, a renowned companion of the Imams:

> O Abu Hamzah, do not raise 'Ali other than what God has raised him in. It is enough for 'Ali that He will fight the people of the Return (*karrah*) and conduct the marriages for the people in Paradise.[48]

However, the reliable *hadith* do not specify whom he will fight or why. Although popular understanding preaches that he will fight the dead, some *hadith* uphold that the dead will be raised to fight the living.[49] Therefore, all that can conclusively be said about Amir al-Mu'mineen is that he will return to fight – but whether he will fight the living or the dead in an offensive or defensive war has not been reliably preserved.

*The Return of the Ancient Prophets to Fulfil their Covenant*

The prophecy that he will fight is bolstered by five *hadith* (including one 'strong' and one 'very strong') which assert that all prophets from the time of Adam will be

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[48] Hadith #22.
[49] Hadith #62.

revived to fight for him in order to fulfil the covenant they took with God, an allusion to verse 3:81 of the Holy Qur'an, an excerpt of which reads:

> Allah took a covenant with the prophets, saying: 'I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you an apostle, confirming what is with you. Will you believe in him and render him help?'

Since this verse does not specify the nature of the covenant that the prophets took, this interpretation is only one of many; however, in the context of the *raj'ah*, it affirms that pre-Islamic personalities are predicted to return. Therefore, the *raj'ah* predictions are not confined to the post-Islamic period, as some authors have speculated.

*The Beast (*Dabbat al-Ardh)

A more curious role that Amir al-Mu'mineen is prophesised to fill is that of the Beast (*dabbat al-ardh*).[50] The Beast is mentioned once in the Holy Qur'an:

> And when the Word is fulfilled against them, We will bring forth for them a Beast from the Earth to speak to them [and to tell them] that the people did not believe in Our signs. (27:82)

Unlike Judaeo-Christian descriptions of the Beast, and even some medieval Muslim imaginings,[51] this Qur'anic description is rather mild and portrays only its primary attribute – that it will speak – presumably, because speaking is its most important function. Otherwise, it does not even specify whether it will emerge in human or animal form.[52]

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[50] 'Beast' may not be the best translation for *dabbah* since a *dabbah* can refer to a creature in human or animal form. However, since the prophesy of the *dabbah* appears to correspond loosely with the Judaeo-Christian prophecy of the Beast, this translation has been used here.
[51] Cook (2002) relates some popular medieval Muslim portrayals of the Beast.
[52] 'Allamah Tabataba'i (1997, vol. 15, p. 398) expands on this point in his explanation of this verse.

However, twenty-four *hadith* in *Kitab al-Raj'ah* identify the Beast as Amir al-Mu'mineen. Three stories predominate. In the first, the Prophet wakes Amir al-Mu'mineen in the mosque and calls him the *dabbat al-ardh*; one 'very strong' *hadith* relates this.[53] In the second, Amir al-Mu'mineen directly asserts he is the Beast; two 'strong' *hadith* relate this.[54] In the third, Amir al-Mu'mineen implies he is the Beast but does not say it directly,[55] and, in one case, uses a phrase – popular in esoteric circles – that this knowledge is:

> …difficult and causes difficulty, and no one discusses it except the nearby angels, or the sent prophets, or the believing servants whose hearts God has tested for faith.'[56]

These latter *hadith* are both less numerous and less reliable than those where Amir al-Mu'mineen actually says he is the Beast.

Unlike Amir al-Mu'mineen the Commander, Amir al-Mu'mineen the Beast will not fight.[57] Rather, several *hadith* – including one 'strong' *hadith* – predict he will bear the *maysam* (animal brand).[58] Although the reliable *hadith* do not say what he will do with it, a *hadith* with no chain of narration predicts that he will brand people's faces as animals are branded.[59] An 'unreliable' *hadith*, attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen, provides some plausible detail:

> The Beast will come out from the earth near Safa,[60] and with it will be the seal of Solomon and the stick of Moses. It will put its seal upon the face of every true believer and stamp on it:

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[53] Hadith #30, categorised as 'very strong', relates this.
[54] Hadith #123, categorised as 'strong', relates this.
[55] See, for instance, Hadith #138-6 and Hadith #138-11.
[56] Hadith #66, 'unreliable'. For more background on this phrase, see *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism* (Amir-Moezzi, 1994, p. 182 n. 283).
[57] Although Hadith #138-18 refers to the Beast as the 'minor punishment' (citing verse 33:21 of the Qur'an), this *hadith* is 'unreliable' and is contradicted by other unreliable *hadith* which refer to the 'minor punishment' as the return of the Messenger of God bearing a sword.
[58] Hadith #123.
[59] Hadith #128.
[60] A mountain near Mecca.

> 'This is a true believer.' And it will put it upon the face of every disbeliever and write upon it: 'This is a true disbeliever.' [61]

Despite the 'unreliable' chain of narration, the content of this *hadith* agrees with the reliable *hadith* as well as the Qur'anic verse and offers a plausible explanation of what the Beast might do with the *maysam.*

Unlike some other *raj'ah hadith*, which bear obvious signs of importation from other religious traditions, this Beast prophecy is sufficiently distinct from the Beast prophecy in the Book of Revelations to suggest that it was not borrowed from Christianity. For one thing, in the Book of Revelations, an angel brands the good on their foreheads (Rev. 7:3), but the Beast brands the evil (Rev. 13:16-18) – whereas, here, the Beast brands both. Additionally, in the Book of Revelations, the Beast is portrayed as evil; whereas, here, Amir al-Mu'mineen is portrayed as good. Therefore, it is more likely to have been an endemic Islamic teaching.

Atypically, twelve of the Beast *hadith* are traced directly to Amir al-Mu'mineen; this is unusual since most *hadith* were not recorded until later. Ten of these *hadith* are from a series of twenty-two *hadith* reproduced in *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* from a book called *Kitab Ta'weel Ma Nuzzila min al-Qur'an fi al-Nabiy wa Alihi (S)*, said to have been endorsed in the handwriting of Sayyid Ibn Tawus; this collection also features a *hadith* from the prolific Sunni narrator Abu Hurayrah and a story from the Jews, both of which indicate that Amir al-Mu'mineen is the Beast. [62] Additionally, both *Tafsir 'Ali ibn Ibrahim* and *Al-Kafi* include *hadith* identifying Amir al-Mu'mineen as the Beast. Therefore, as odd as it might sound, reliable *hadith* do suggest that the Imams prophesised that Imam 'Ali would return as the Beast. [63]

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[61] Hadith #120, an excerpt.
[62] Hadith #138-10 and Hadith #138-12.
[63] Hadith #30 ('very strong') and Hadith #123 ('strong'), respectively.

*A ‘Strong’ Hadith with Weak Content*

The ‘Beast’ narrative does bring up the question of how Amir al-Mu’mineen will return in these dual roles. One possibility is that he will return more than once; this idea is supported by an ostensibly ‘strong’ hadith. However, while the chain of narration of this *hadith* is reasonably strong, its lengthy and effusive style is much more similar to the unreliable narrative *hadith.* It spans a broad range of topics, such as the pre-creation of the Prophet and Imams and the covenant of the Prophets. It then launches into a long eulogy of the merits of Amir al-Mu’mineen, related by Amir al-Mu’mineen himself, a fraction of which reads:

> I have *karrah* after *karrah*, and *raj‘ah* after *raj‘ah*. I am the Master of the Returns (*raj‘at*) and the Reappearances (*karrat*). I am the the Master of the Forces and the Vengeances and the amazing Nations (*al-dawlat al-’ajeebat*).... I am the one who was given control of the clouds and the thunder and the lightning, and the darkness and the light, and the winds and the mountains and the seas, and the stars and the Sun and the Moon. [64]

Taken piecemeal, some sections of this *hadith* might arguably fit within the limits of normative Shi‘a belief (although those limits can admittedly be rather broad). For instance, the reference to Amir al-Mu’mineen controlling the stars could be construed as an allusion to the controversial theory of *wilayah takweeniyyah*, by which God grants His representatives the theoretical ability to control the universe.[65] However, taken as a whole, this *hadith* overwhelmingly exaggerates Imam ‘Ali to the level of godhood in extremist style. It also reflects the extremist expressions of

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[64] Hadith #20, from *Muntakhab al-Basa’ir.* The chain of narration does contain one questionable individual – Ahmad ibn Khalid ibn Muhammad al-Barqi, who is said to have been reliable but to have narrated from weak narrators; however, the narrators above him are both agreed to be reliable. The full chain of narration is: Imam Al-Baqir **->** ‘Asim ibn Hameed **->** Ibn Abi Najran **->** Ahmad ibn Khalid ibn Muhammad al-Barqi **->** Ja‘far ibn Muhammad al-Bajali **->** a book narrated from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn ‘Abdullah al-Atrush.

[65] For an explanation of this belief, see *An Enlightening Commentary of the Holy Qur’an*, vol. 5, commentary of verses 3:48-49 (Imani, 2005).

vengeance. Therefore, although the chain of narration of this *hadith* is 'strong', its content will be treated as questionable throughout this analysis.

*The Muntasir and the Saffah*

Three *hadith* predict the return of Imam al-Husayn and Amir al-Mu'mineen as the *muntasir* (the 'avenger') and the *saffah* ('the blood-shedder'), respectively.[66] The *muntasir* – that is to say, Imam al-Husayn – is predicted to emerge 19 years after the appearance of the Qa'im to avenge his blood and the blood of his companions. He will 'kill and take prisoner' until he himself is surrounded and killed. Then, in anger, the *saffah* will emerge – namely, Amir al-Mu'mineen – and he will massacre all the enemies of the *muntasir.*

Apart from contradicting the reliable *hadith* describing the lengthy rule of Imam al-Husayn, the concept of the *muntasir* and the *saffah* appears connected to one person – 'Amr ibn Abi Miqdam al-Thabit, whom Ibn al-Ghadha'iri criticises as 'very weak'.[67] He relates *hadith* about it twice from Jabir al-Ju'fi, a companion of Imam al-Sadiq. In the third *hadith*, the chain of narration is cut off after Jabir, but since the content is the same, it may well have also come from him. In any case, the tale of the *muntasir* and the *saffah* appears absolutely unreliable.

## The Return of the Prophet Muhammad

Although, in normative Shi'a belief, the Prophet is considered to be of a higher status than the Imams, he plays a secondary role in the *raj'ah* narrative. The

[66] Hadith #121, #122, and #130d.
[67] However, since the other biographers do not criticise him, he is not listed as 'unreliable'.

reliable *hadith* simply say he will return, without any indication of what he might return to do. For instance, two 'very strong' *hadith* read:

> Your Prophet will return to you.[68]

Although this prophecy may appear to refer only ambiguously to the *raj'ah*, one of these *hadith* also mentions the return of Imam al-Husayn to rule until his eyebrows droop.

Only the unreliable and chainless *hadith* describe the Prophet as a fighter; however, even then, they demote him to a secondary role – as fighting for Imam Ali, Imam al-Husayn, and the Qa'im. The only *hadith* to grant him an equal role (again, an 'unreliable' *hadith*) tells how the Prophet once became uncharacteristically angry and threatened the Quraysh that he would slash their necks in the *raj'ah.* This *hadith* is even all the more unreliable, considering that none of the Quraysh themselves ever mentioned it, *hadith* on the *raj'ah* being the exclusive property of the Shi'a.[69]

Given that the Prophet headed the Islamic community, he might be expected to take up leadership. However, only two *hadith* mention this. One, which has no chain of narration, predicts that the Prophet will rule for 50,000 years and Amir al-Mu'mineen for 44,000 – thus preserving the superiority of the Prophet (although considerably lengthening their lifespans).[70] The other, which is 'unreliable', foretells a re-enactment of the Battle of Siffin (similar to the *hadith* which foretells a re-enactment of the Battle of Karbala). Only after the battle is won does the Prophet return to life – still, not as a fighter, but as a ruler:

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[68] Hadith #19 and Hadith #33.
[69] Hadith #60.
[70] Hadith #130b.

> Then there will be another return with the Prophet (S) so that he becomes the caliph over he Earth, and the Imams are his governors....Allah will give His Prophet (S) rule over all of the people from the day when Allah created the world until the day He destroys it.[71]

While the arrangement of the Prophet as the caliph and the Imams as his governors does appeal to the Shi'a conception of their respective roles, the conclusion to this *hadith* presents a problem since not all people are expected to return in the *raj'ah*. Therefore, although the idea of the Prophet ruling is not problematic in and of itself, no reliable *hadith* support it.

*Religious Syncretism in a Hadith about the Prophet*

Only one 'very unreliable' *hadith* presents the Prophet as a primary figure in the *raj'ah.* This *hadith* is related by two of the same 'Waqifi extremist liars' who related the *hadith* about the return of the companions of Imam al-Husayn. Like the other 'very unreliable' *hadith*, it features an unusually detailed narrative. Of all the *hadith* in *Kitab al-Raj'ah*, this one also most obviously calls to mind other Near Eastern religious beliefs. In this 'very unreliable' *hadith*, Satan reaches the end of his respite, and the Prophet returns to slay him:

> So when the known day arrives, Amir al-Mu'mineen (A) will return with his companions, and Iblis [Satan] with his companions. They will meet in a land near the Euphrates. It will be said to him: 'Al-Rawha is near to your Kufa,' and so they will fight a battle which has never been seen before since Allah the Mighty and Glorious created the world.
>
> It is as if I [Imam al-Sadiq] am looking at the companions of 'Ali, Amir al-Mu'mineen (A). They will have retreated one hundred steps back, and it is as if I see them, and some of their feet are dipping into the Euphrates.
>
> Then, at that time, the Compelling Lord, Mighty and Glorious, will descend in the shadows of the clouds, and the angels, and the Messenger of God (S) will determine the matter in front of him. In his hand will be a spear of light. So when Iblis looks at him, he will retreat, fleeing upon his heels, and his companions will say to him: 'Where are you going? You have been victorious!'

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[71] Hadith #75 (excerpt).

> And he will say: 'I see what you do not see. I fear God, the Lord of the Worlds.'
> Then the Prophet (S) will overtake him and pierce him with a stab between his shoulders, and he will be destroyed, and all of his followers will be destroyed. From that time, God, the Mighty and Glorious, will be worshipped and no partners will be ascribed to Him.[72]

Although the Qur'an (2:210) metaphorically mentions the idea of God descending in the clouds, the actual expectation of God Himself descending to Earth goes completely against Shi'a theology, which denies the possibility of ever physically seeing God (Sobhani & Kazemi, 2001). However, it does correspond to a passage about Jesus in the Book of Revelations:

> Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, including those who pierced him. (Rev. 1:7)

The great war against Satan also resembles a prediction in the Book of Revelations, except that, here, Satan is destroyed by fire rather than a weapon of light:

> And after the thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison, and he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. They went up over the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints, and the beloved city. Fire came down out of heaven from God, and devoured them. (Rev. 20:7-9)

Despite the similarities to the Bible, the religious syncretism in this *hadith* is not limited to Christianity; it also calls to mind Manichaean beliefs about the earthly destruction of evil. These Manichaean-style *hadith* can be traced back to one of the unreliable narrators, 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami, whom Najjashi condemned for relating *hadith* from extremists. In addition to relating this *hadith* and the *hadith* about the return of the companions of Imam al-Husayn,[73] he also related other Manichaean-sounding *hadith* – in particular, the explanation that:

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[72] Hadith #12 (excerpt).
[73] This *hadith* was quoted above in the section on the return of Imam al-Husayn.

> Regarding the words of God, the Exalted and Glorious: 'On the Day when they will be tried upon the Fire',[74] he [the Imam] said: 'They will be melted in the *karrah* like gold is melted, until everything returns to its form, meaning its truth.'[75]

Apart from the fact that no other *hadith* describe the *raj'ah* as a time of sifting things into their true form, this idea sounds again like an import from Manicheism, which holds that the good and evil are 'mixed' in the earthly life but separated right before the Hereafter.[76, 77] Since, in most cases, 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami is the primary narrator and attributes these *hadith* directly to Imam al-Sadiq, he seems to be the most likely contributor of this Manichean and Christian content. Of course, since Manicheism itself is said to have been influenced by Christianity, perhaps a better description – which Amir-Moezzi would undoubtedly approve of – is 'Near Eastern gnostic content.'

*Tafsir Hadith and the Return of the Prophet*

While almost half of the *raj'ah hadith* cite Qur'anic verses, the *tafsir hadith* stand out in predictions regarding the Prophet – not only for their unreliability, but also because they refer to commonly quoted verses. These are some of the verses said to speak of his return:

> **'Verily, He who ordained the Qur'an for you will return you to the Resurrection'** (28:85). According to the only reliable *tafsir hadith* referring to the Prophet, this verse predicts the return of the Prophet in the *raj'ah.*

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[74] Qur'an 51:13.
[75] Hadith #15, 'unreliable'.
[76] See Sundermann (1998) for a description of Manichaean eschatological beliefs.
[77] In contrast, the commentator of *Bihar al-Anwar* speculates that these *hadith* refer to other *hadith* (which themselves are unreliable) saying that good and bad human beings were pre-created out of different types of clay.

**'And he will enter the Mosque as he entered it the first time'** (17:7). While this verse is generally understood to refer to return of the Jews to the Temple, a *tafsir hadith* with no chain of narration says that this verse refers to the Prophet and Amir al-Mu'mineen entering the Sacred Mosque during the *raj'ah* (which, basically, would be the third time they would enter it).

**'And the end (*akhirah*) will be better for you than the beginning'** (93:4).This verse is addressed to the Prophet. Although *akhirah* usually refers to the Hereafter or to the latter end of the Prophet's life, a 'very unreliable' *hadith* explains that, here, it refers to the *raj'ah.*[78]

**'O you who are wrapped in cloth, rise, and warn!'** (74:1-2) Three 'very unreliable' *hadith* explain that this verse refers to the role of the Prophet as a warner during the *raj'ah.*[79] They do not explain why he would come back to warn people since, according to Shaykh al-Mufeed, repentance will no longer be possible in the time of the *raj'ah* (McDermott, 1986).

While two of the *hadith* relating this interpretation are relatively concise, the third is much more revealing. Aside from offering this interpretation, it says that the verse 'Every soul will taste death' was originally revealed as 'Every soul will taste death and resurrection (*manshurah*)' and was meant to refer to the *raj'ah* before it was truncated. Of course, this interpretation contradicts the vast number of reliable *hadith* which specify that only selected souls – rather

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[78] Hadith #43, from *Tafsir Ali ibn Ibrahim.*
[79] Hadith #10, #11, and #55, all from Muntakhab al-Basa'ir.

than every single soul – will experience the *raj'ah*. It also contradicts the general belief that the Qur'anic text has been preserved intact.

Curiously, all three of these *hadith* – although in different wordings – are related from Muhammad ibn Sanan, through another narrator, through al-Mankhal ibn Jameel. In fact, these are the only *raj'ah hadith* that al-Mankhal ibn Jameel narrates, although Muhammad ibn Sanan narrates others. It is difficult to determine which of them might have originated this content (assuming it is false, of course). While the end of the *hadith* – which predicts the resurrection and punishment of 'Uthman and the Umayyids – may provide a clue, it too does not suffice, for the same pair narrated other extremist-sounding anti-Umayyid *hadith*, such as: 'If you leave aside your prescribed ritual prayer, do not leave aside cursing the Umayyids.'[80] However, since al-Mankhal ibn Jameel is higher on the chain of narration and only participated in these three *raj'ah hadith*, it will be assumed that this material came from him – especially since he was condemned for being weak, extremist, and corrupting *hadith*.[81]

Since Qur'anic verses are said to have multiple layers of meaning, the contradiction between these interpretations and other, more commonly established interpretations is itself not problematic. However, in addition to being unreliable, these *hadith* do seem to stretch the meaning of the verses. The latter interpretation, in particular, appears as if it could have been the product of extremists (such as al-Mankhal ibn Jameel), since belief in the corruption of the Qur'anic text was popular among them.

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[80] *Tahdheeb al-Ahkam*, vol. 2, p. 109.

[81] Although Muhammad ibn Sanan has also been criticised by some biographers, the condemnation of him is not as severe.

Therefore, these interpretations cannot be looked towards to find a role for the Prophet in the *raj'ah*, and the only reliable *tafsir hadith* predicts the same thing as the other reliable *hadith* do – namely, that the Prophet will appear.

**The Return of all the Imams**

In addition to Qur'anic verses, *ziyarat* texts are quoted throughout *Kitab al-Raj'ah.*[82] Like the *tafsir hadith*, the *ziyarat hadith* are typically unverified. However, unlike some of the *tafsir hadith*, they do not stretch the bounds of credibility.

The most reliable of these *hadith* is a quotation from *Ziyarat al-Jami'ah al-Kabeerah*, or *The Complete and Comprehensive Salutation*, which is addressed to all the Imams. Although it hails from the prominent work *Man La Yahdhurhu al-Faqih*, it is categorised as 'average' since it was narrated through three unknown narrators and one – Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Barmaki – whom Ibn al-Ghadha'iri calls 'weak' (although Najjashi and 'Allamah Hilli call him 'trustworthy'). The selection reads:

> Make me one who follows in your footsteps and follows in your paths and is guided by your guidance and is raised in your group and returns in your *raj'ah* and rules in your states and is honoured with your safety and is present in your days and whose eyes are pleased tomorrow with the sight of you.[83]

This selection is the strongest evidence in all of *Kitab al-Raj'ah* that the Imams indicated they would return. It also indicates that they said they would hold temporal power. However, it is worth noting that it only specifically mentions the Imams, not the Prophet.

Additionally, one 'strong' *hadith* attributed to Imam 'Ali implies the return of the Imams:

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[82] A *ziyarat* is a ritual salutation typically read in front of the graves of the Prophet and Imams.
[83] Hadith #99.

> I am the aged one (*sayyid al-shayb*), as old as Job, and, by God, He will join me with my children like he joined Jacob [with his children]. [84]

Even if this *hadith* is reliable, it does not explicitly state how or why he will be joined with his children, or which children they will be – that is to say, all of the Imams, or just some of them. Therefore, it can only be taken as supplementary evidence. It does, however, suggest that the *raj'ah* was discussed well before the second or third centuries, as some have postulated.

Further supplementary evidence can be gleaned from 'Ali ibn Ibrahim who, in his *tafsir*, says that there are many *hadith* in which the Imams say they will return to the world, at which time they will be aided in a way they were never aided before. [85] Since he was living much closer to the time of the Imams, he was probably much more aware of what they said; however, since he does not actually provide these *hadith*, they cannot be viewed as conclusive in this study. He also does not clarify whether they will fight, rule, or fulfil some other function.

It is also not clear whether the Imams are predicted to return all at once, or in sequence, or some other manner. Outside of *Kitab al-Raj'ah*, 'Allamah al-Majlesi takes the effort to prove that more than one Imam can be present on Earth at one time, as long as only one officially takes the role of Imam – and that no one should object to the *raj'ah* because of this point; apart from providing an argument, the *hadith* he cites in his argument suggest what concerns some of the early Shi'a might have had regarding the *raj'ah.* And, of course, since the dead will have already risen, the natural laws of the world will have already been bent; and so, in comparison, having multiple Imams hardly bears mentioning. [86]

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[84] Hadith #80, from *Majalis al-Mufid.* Hadith #137, which does not have a chain of narration, contains similar content.

[85] His commentary follows Hadith #50.

[86] For example, *see Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 25, p 107.

However, the unreliable *hadith* do conflict on how the Imams will return. In contrast to an 'unreliable' *hadith* which predicts that the Imams will return as governors,[87] a 'very unreliable' *hadith* predicts not only twelve Imams but twelve Mahdis (as distinct from Imams).[88] This *hadith*, in turn, contradicts a 'suspect' *hadith* that Amir al-Mu'mineen will be the last to die.[89] Therefore, how or when the Imams are predicted to return and hold power cannot be deduced.

**The Return of Non-Prophetic Individuals**

Perhaps the most agreed-upon idea about the *raj'ah* is that it will not be for all; rather, only those who have absolute faith and absolute faithlessness will be returned.[90] Several *hadith*, including one 'strong' and one 'very strong',[91] put forward this Qur'anic verse as proof of a selective resurrection:

> On the Day when We will gather from every people a band of those who rejected Our signs, and they will be kept in ranks. (27:83)

The *hadith* argue that this verse must refer to the *raj'ah* since all people will be resurrected in the Hereafter, not just 'bands'. It has therefore become one of the more prominent verses in polemical discussions.

*The Believers must Die and Be Killed*

Another frequently quoted premise is that the believers must 'die and be

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[87] Quoted above in the section on the return of the Prophet.
[88] Hadith #138-21.
[89] Hadith #65.
[90] Hadith #1, *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir*, 'very strong'; Hadith #30, *Tafsir Ali ibn Ibrahim.*
[91] Hadith #5 and #6, respectively, both from *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir.*

killed.' Eight *hadith* – including three 'very strong' and one 'strong' – explain how this idea also implies the necessity of the *raj'ah*.[92] For if a believer is killed, he must return to this world to die a natural death. And if he dies a natural death, he must return to this world to be killed.

This prophecy may have been comforting to those who would have liked to give their lives for their faith, as an 'unreliable' *hadith* suggests:

> I said to him [the Imam]:[93] I have grown old, and my bones have become weak. I would love to end my life being killed for you.
>
> He said: It is not like that. If it does not happen soon (*al-'ajilah*), it will happen in the life to come (*al-ajilah*).[94, 95]

However, it does seem incongruous that a mass number of believers would be resurrected to be slain by their enemies as a time when the believers are supposed to have the earthly upper hand. After all, the believers ostensibly cannot enjoy the victory of truth if they are dead. While strong in terms of chain of narration, this prophecy does not fit into either the reliable or the unreliable descriptions of the essence of the *raj'ah.*

Of all the reliable predictions, this one is the most highly dependent on Sa'd (and Ibn Abi al-Khattab), as seven of the eight *hadith* citing this verse come from Sa'd through Ibn Abi al-Khattab (although, in some cases, other narrators narrate with Ibn Abi al-Khattab). The remaining *hadith* only has the primary narrator listed and looks as if it may be identical to a *hadith* that Sa'd related. Without Sa'd, this idea would not have persisted until the present day.

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[92] Hadith #5, #58, and #59 ('very strong'); Hadith #70 ('strong').
[93] The *hadith* does not specify which Imam was being addressed.
[94] While '*al-ajilah*' generally refers to the Hereafter, 'Allamah Majlesi is suggesting that, in this context, it refers to the *raj'ah*.
[95] Hadith #84.

*Destroyed Peoples will not Be Returned*

In contrast, a different verse of the Qur'an is cited to prove that those peoples whom God destroyed will not be returned in the *raj'ah*:

> It is forbidden for any people that We have destroyed to return. (21:95)

Although this verse can be interpreted in other ways that do not involve the *raj'ah*, it does have to be admitted that it could literally mean this.

Three *hadith* refer to this verse. Of the three, one is indeterminate as its primary narrator cannot be conclusively identified; however, it is probably a strong chain of narration as it contains Ibn Abi 'Umayr.[96] The second is 'suspect' due to the presence of Muhammad ibn Sanan al-Zahiri (who also narrated the *hadith* about the *mudaththir* from al-Mankhal ibn Jameel) – but it also seems potentially reliable since it also contains Ibn Abi 'Umayr.[97] The third *hadith* has no chain of narration; unlike the other two, it is ascribed to Amir al-Mu'mineen.[98] Therefore, just as the former prophecy is dependent on Sa'd, this prophecy is dependent on Ibn Abi 'Umayr. However, unlike the former prophecy, it does not appear to contradict the essence of other established *hadith* on the *raj'ah.*

**The Return of Specific Individuals to Aid the Imams**

In addition to the general prediction of the return of the believers, a few specific individuals are named as returning on the side of the Imams. The strongest

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[96] Hadith #65.
[97] Hadith #29.
[98] Hadith #149.

*hadith* – which, admittedly, can only be assumed to pertain to the *raj'ah* – predicts the return of two lauded companions of Imam al-Sadiq:

> It is as if I am with Hamran ibn A'yan and Maysar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez with their swords when they are addressing the people between Safa and Marwa.[99, 100]

While the primary narrator of this *hadith*, Ibn Bukayr, was considered very reliable, he also held Fathi beliefs. Since many of the non-Imami sects emphasised the immediate need for revolt, his views may have affected how he perceived or related the Imam's words.

Two other *hadith* – one 'suspect' and one 'very unreliable' – predict the return of another lauded companion, 'Abdullah ibn Shareek al-'Amiri. While the 'suspect' *hadith* only say that he will be raised with Isma'il, the son of Imam al-Sadiq,[101] a 'very unreliable' *hadith* – related through the aforementioned Sahl ibn Ziyad – presents a grander picture:

> Abu Ja'far (A) said: It is as if I am with 'Abdullah ibn Shareek al-'Amiri, and he is wearing a black turban with the ends between his shoulders, and he is ascending the foot of the mountain between the hands of our Qa'im of the Ahl al-Bayt with 4,000 men shouting 'God is great!' and advancing.[102]

Although 'Allamah Majlesi quotes this *hadith* from *Rijal al-Kashshi*, it can no longer be found in the modern edition of *Rijal al-Kashshi*, and so Kashshi's motivation for including it cannot be deduced. (However, Ibn Dawud does verify that it came from Kashshi; perhaps his book was the one that 'Allamah Majlesi quoted it from) Apart from the fact that it is 'very unreliable', this *hadith* is the only one to assign such a heroic role to an ordinary individual, and so it probably was misrelated, either in spirit or in content.

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[99] Safa and Marwa are two hills in Mecca.
[100] Hadith #7, 'strong'.
[101] Hadith #82.
[102] Hadith #81.

Some of the ancients are also mentioned. Although it has already been established that the prophets were predicted to return, a story in a 'suspect' *hadith* tells of why one specific prophet, Isma'il ibn Hizqayl, is expected to return. In this *hadith*, Imam al-Sadiq is asked whether the Qur'anic verse 'And mention Isma'il in the Book; he was true to his promise and was a messenger sent' (19:54) refers to Isma'il, the son of Abraham. The Imam replies that it does not, for Isma'il died before Abraham, and, anyway, Abraham was of such high stature that Isma'il would not need to be mentioned after him. Rather:

> This was Isma'il ibn Hizqayl, the prophet (A) whom God raised among his people, but they denied him and killed him and flayed the skin from his face. So God became angry with them and sent him Satata'eel, the Angel of Punishment, who said to him: 'O Isma'il! I am Satata'eel, the Angel of Punishment. The Great Lord has sent me to you to punish your people with whatever type of punishment you like.'
>
> So Ismail said to him: 'I have no need of that, O Satata'eel.'
>
> So God revealed to him: What would you like, O Isma'il?
>
> Isma'il said: 'O Lord, You have taken a covenant with Yourself for Lordship, and with Muhammad for prophethood, and with His successors for allegiance. You have told Your creation what his people will do to Husayn ibn 'Ali (A) after the Prophet. You have promised to resurrect Husayn so he can take revenge for what they did to him. So my desire from You, O Lord, is that you return me to the world so that I may take revenge for what they did to him as you raise Husayn.'
>
> So God promised Isma'il ibn Hizqayl this, and he will return with Husayn ibn 'Ali (A).[103]

Although this *hadith* is not verifiable, it does reflect many common Shi'a themes – for instance, foreknowledge of the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn. This verse has been connected with Isma'il ibn Hizqayl elsewhere – but without his request to be returned in the *raj 'ah* (Rayshahri, 2009). However, the main thrust of the *hadith* – that Imam al-Husayn will return to avenge himself – cannot be found in any of the reliable *hadith.* Therefore, like its chain of narration, this particular retelling of the story of Isma'il ibn Hizqayl seems suspect.

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[103] Hadith #132.

Finally, a couple of *hadith* without sufficient chains of narration predict the return of other notable ancients. One foretells that, from behind Kufa, twenty-three ancients will return: fifteen from the people of Moses, the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (*ashab al-kahf*), and the Prophet Joshua. Along with them will emerge four companions of Amir al-Mu'mineen: Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dujanah al-Ansari, Miqdad, and Malik al-Ashtar.[104] In the other *hadith*, the Prophet predicts that Salman will meet all the Imams – thus suggesting that they might return together, or at least within a reasonable time frame.[105] The *hadith* about Salman al-Farsi seems slightly more credible than the *hadith* about 'Abdullah ibn Shareek since, first of all, Salman's name is more iconic; and, second, the prediction of his return is less elaborate. In any case, all of the individuals mentioned would be expected to return under the categories of the return of the Prophets and the return of the believers. However, whether or not they were actually predicted to return together from Kufa cannot be verified.

*The Punishment of Individuals Revered in the Sunni Tradition*

No reliable *hadith* actually predict that any specific people will be returned to be punished. However, since one of the sectarian objections to the *raj'ah* is that the Shi'a predict the return and chastisement of certain personalities respected in the Sunni *tradition*, *hadith* about them are worth exploring separately.

The most graphic description of the punishment of these individuals is found in the Hadith of Mufaddal – which, as described earlier, is absolutely unreliable and carries no weight whatsoever as an indicator of the teachings of the Imams. Additionally, three 'very unreliable' *hadith* in *Kitab al-Raj'ah* address those

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[104] Hadith #95.
[105] Hadith #162.

individuals. One – which is the *hadith* about the corruption of the Qur'anic text narrated by al-Mankhal ibn Jameel – describes Amir al-Mu'mineen and his followers fighting the resurrected 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and his followers.[106] It also alludes to killing 'the man from Bani Umayyah by the tree'; as that phrase is quite vague, it may or may not refer to the story in the Hadith of Mufaddal. However, since the remaining content of this *hadith* is so questionable, and since al-Mankhal ibn Jameel was thought to have corrupted *hadith*, this *hadith* must be dismissed.

The second *hadith* predicts the return of A'ishah to receive shariah punishment.[107] It was related by three suspect narrators, including Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Daylami, whom Najjashi condemns as 'very weak', 'an extremist', and 'a liar' and summarises with: 'Do not depend on him for anything.'

The third *hadith* does not actually mention those to be punished by name. However, it appears to be a sideways reference to specific individuals as part of 'the oppressors and *taghut* from the Quraysh and Bani Umayyah.'[108] It is related from 'Ali ibn Abi Hamzah al-Bata'ini – whom Kashshi calls a 'cursed liar' and whom Ibn al-Ghadha'iri invokes he curse of God upon – and his son, who received similar reviews.

To summarise, all three *hadith* predicting the return and punishment of revered Sunni personalities are not only unreliable, but, given the reputation of their narrators, were probably forged. Therefore, there is no evidence that the Imams verbalised these predictions.

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[106] Hadith #55.
[107] Hadith #93.
[108] Hadith #42.

### *The Punishment of the Umayyids*

Additionally, eight *hadith* describe the resurrection and punishment of the Umayyids. *Hadith* like this are hardly surprising since the Umayyids, among other things, instituted the ritual cursing of Amir al-Mu'mineen and instigated the murder of Imam al-Husayn. Of these *hadith*, however, two are 'unreliable', two are 'very unreliable', and the remaining four lack sufficient chains of narration. Although the general idea of the return of the Umayyids does not contradict any verifiable *hadith*, the unreliability of these *hadith* suggests that specific predictions of their return may not have been uttered by the Imams

However, Shaykh al-Mufeed did refer to the revivication and punishment of Yazeed ibn Mu'awiyah (the Umayyid caliph who ordered the murder of Imam al-Husayn) in one of his debates with the Mu'tazilites (McDermott, 1986). Therefore, this idea seems to have been in common circulation among the learned Shi'a of his time, and this may lend it some credence.

## Places and Times

### *A Rising in Rajab*

Apart from the question of what will happen during the *raj'ah*, there is the question of when it will happen, and where. Attempts to put the *raj'ah* in some sort of context often revolve around five *hadith* which describe a rising in the month of Rajab – which, depending on the narrative strand one accepts, may or may not be the only *raj'ah*. These *hadith*, in turn, revolve around some usual verses accredited – and probably falsely accredited – to Amir al-Mu'mineen:

> *Al-'ajab kull al-'ajab bayna Jumada wa Rajab*
> How strange and wondrous, so entirely strange and wondrous, between Jumada and Rajab[109]

Of the *hadith* foretelling the rising in Rajab, three are 'unreliable' and two are 'very unreliable'; perhaps their only redeeming factor is that they were all narrated in different books by different unreliable narrators.

However, were one to wonder what these verses foretold, an unusually grotesque 'unreliable' *hadith* paints a picture of this strange and wondrous event:

> When the Qa'im rises, it will rain upon people in the month of Jumada al-Akhirah, and ten days of the month of Rajab. It will be a rain that all of creation has never seen the like of before. With it, Allah will cause the flesh and bodies of the believers in their graves to grow [like plants]. It is as if I see them, facing each other, and coming forth from the area of Juhaynah.[110] They are tearing their hair from the dirt.[111]

While the return of the believers is supported, the return in Rajab is not. While there is no particular reason to object to it – seeing as there are only twelve months to choose from – the diversity in the chains of narrations suggests that someone might have coined these verses, and they later took on their own life. This idea is supported by an unusual *hadith* in which one of the companions of Imam al-Sadiq relates that he chanced upon a people who believed that the Prophet had composed these verses about the rising in Rajab.[112]

### *Kufa*

Just as Rajab is the primary time mentioned, Kufa is the primary place mentioned in the *raj'ah hadith.* Eleven *hadith* relate prophecies slated to unfold in or

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[109] Hadith #46 and #85.

[110] Juhaynah refers to a tribal meeting place either in the Arabian Peninsula or (more likely in this context) near Kufa. Thanks to Dr. J. Hussain for providing this translation.

[111] Hadith #94, *Irshad al-Qulub.*

[112] Hadith #85.

around Kufa. Of these *hadith*, five are ‘unreliable’, two are ‘very unreliable’, two lack sufficient chains of narration, and one is the *hadith* described earlier as having a ‘strong’ chain of narration but suspect content. When read together, these *hadith* predict that the world will not end until the Prophet meets Amir al-Mu’mineen near the Mosque of Kufa – perhaps, as one ‘unreliable’ *hadith* predicts, in the (relatively) nearby cemetery of Wadi al-Salaam.[113]

Although none of the *hadith* mentioning Kufa are reliable, the emphasis on Kufa is not terribly suspect. Amir al-Mu’mineen concluded his caliphate in Kufa and was buried nearby; therefore, he would be expected to rise there. Other *hadith* describe the merits of worshipping in the Mosque of Kufa, and Mesopotamia itself boasts of historical and religious significance as the cradle of civilisation where the ancient prophets walked. The final chapter of human history might be expected to begin there.

On the other hand, given that expectation, anyone who wanted to fabricate a *raj‘ah* story would probably set it in Kufa. Since most of the Kufa *hadith* were related by individuals who were known for lying and extremism, this is a distinct possibility. Therefore, the predictions regarding Kufa cannot be confirmed.

## Purposes of the *Raj‘ah*

### *Vengeance*

Since the *raj‘ah* is so popularly associated with the concept of vengeance, it may seem odd to introduce it as a separate subject. And yet, although twenty-six *hadith* in *Kitab al-Raj‘ah* specifically predict vengeance or punishment – as opposed to

[113] Hadith #113.

simply battle – not a single one is even remotely reliable. Eight are 'very unreliable', five are 'unreliable', and three are 'suspect'. Not only do many of the unreliable *hadith* (several of which have been cited previously) contain questionable content, but these 'suspect' *hadith* are also likely to be inauthentic, as two pertain to the *muntasir* and *saffah* (attributed to 'Amr ibn Thabit), and one is the extended story of Isma'il ibn Hizqayl.

Although the remaining *hadith* which lack chains of narration could be authentic, they either mimic the inauthentic content or else rely on questionable Qur'anic interpretations. For instance, one chainless *hadith* interprets this verse of the Qur'an as pertaining to punishment in the *raj'ah* with the sword:

> And We will make them taste the minor punishment in lieu of the major punishment so that they may return. (32:21)

Even if al-Mankhal ibn Jameel had not related the same interpretation in his very unreliable *hadith* about the *mudaththir* and the corruption of the Qur'an, interpreting 'the minor punishment' as 'punishment in the *raj'ah*' does not make sense. For if this minor punishment were to transpire during the *raj'ah*, the causal relationship between 'the minor punishment' and 'returning' would be lost, since the returning would have occurred before the punishment. A more common interpretation seems more plausible; namely, that God might punish some people in this earthly life so they would repent and return to Him (Al-Mahalli & As-Suyuti, 2007).

The other chainless *hadith* are similarly unconvincing. Therefore, despite the common association of the *raj'ah* with vengeance, all surviving evidence suggests that the Imams did not actually articulate this.

It is possible, however, to speculate who might have articulated it. While the *hadith* about vengeance come from a variety of 'very unreliable' narrators, certain

narrators figure more prominently among them and may have introduced certain ideas into the narrative. They are:

- **'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami**, mentioned above for the Manichaean ideas that he attributes to Imam al-Sadiq.
- **Abu Jameelah (Al-Mufaddal ibn Salih)**, who relates the unsubstantiated story about the Prophet threatening to slice the necks of the Quraysh in the *raj'ah*.
- **'Ali ibn Abi Hamzah al-Bata'ini** and his son Hasan, mentioned above for their two *hadith* featuring the Umayyids.
- **'Amr ibn Shimr al-Ju'fi**, who predicts the second Battle of Siffin.
- **'Amr ibn Thabit**, mentioned above for describing Amir al-Mu'mineen and Imam al-Husayn as the *saffah* and the *muntasir*.
- **Al-Mankhal ibn Jameel**, mentioned above for his *hadith* about the *mudaththir*, the corruption of the Qur'anic text, and the Umayyids.
- **Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Daylami**, who relates the above *hadith* about the punishment of A'ishah and another *hadith* about punishing the enemies of the Shi'a in the *raj'ah.* His *hadith* differ from the others in that they are phrased in the subjunctive tense – that is to say, 'If the Qa'im had stood (*law qad qaama al-Qa'im*)' – rather than in the simple future tense.
- **Al-Qasim ibn Yahya ibn Hasan ibn Rashid**, who relates two *hadith* about souls being returned to heal themselves by sending their enemies to extreme punishment. No one other than him relates this idea.[114]
- **'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez** – who, despite being unreliable, does not relate anything of distinction other than predictions of violence. His questionable

[114] Hadith #16 and Hadith #17.

but non-extremist *hadith* correlate with Fadhl ibn Shadhan's opinion that he was a poor narrator but not an extremist.

All of the above, with the exception of 'Amr ibn Thabit, were severely condemned by all the biographers who mentioned them. Although other unreliable narrators also participated in the narration of *hadith* regarding vengeance, these narrators appear to be most responsible for the ideas mentioned after their names.

A handful, such as al-Hadhrami and al-Bata'ini, were also known for holding Waqifi beliefs; this is not particularly surprising since many of the early Shi'a left the Imami path in search of an Imam who would lead an imminent uprising. However, not all of the unreliable *raj'ah* narrators were of non-Imami persuasions. While divergent beliefs may have led some to invent or exaggerate prophecies of vengeance, these sects were clearly not the sole source of this idea. Given their diversity, these narrators were not the sole source of vengeful narrations either; probably, they were simply an outgrowth of the situation the Shi'a were living in.

*Fulfilling the Promise of God*

Of course, it is entirely possible that the Imams did predict that the deceased would be returned to be punished – but if they did, no reliable record remains. If they did not, however, the question arises: what will they be revived for?

Several *hadith* argue that the *raj'ah* is necessary to fulfil the promise of God on the grounds that God promised certain things to (or required certain things from) certain individuals in the Holy Qur'an. Since these promises were not fulfilled during their earthly lifetimes, they must be resurrected before the end of the world to fulfil them. While this idea has an inherent logic, accepting these arguments

requires accepting these particular Qur'anic interpretations, which are not always apparent.

For instance, a *hadith* with no chain of narration says that the following verses apply to Amir al-Mu'mineen:[115]

> Then He made him die and buried him. Then when He wills, He will resurrect him. Nay, he did not judge as he was commanded. (80:21-23)

According to the *hadith*, since Amir al-Mu'mineen was not able to judge as he was commanded in this life, he will be returned to life to do so. However, since none of the verses actually mention Amir al-Mu'mineen, his relationship to them can only be accepted on faith.

Another *hadith* – specifically the 'unreliable' *hadith* which predicts the second Siffin – says that this verse applies to the Prophet:

> In order to make it [Islam] manifest over all religions, even though the polytheists detest it. (9:33)

According to this *hadith*, the Prophet must return to life to fulfil this prophecy. However, it is not clear to the casual observer why the Mahdi could not take this role instead.

On the other hand, three *hadith* – including one 'very strong' *hadith* – say that this verse will be fulfilled in the *raj'ah*:[116]

> And We wish to bestow upon those who have been oppressed in the Earth and make them Imams and make them the inheritors. (28:5)

By itself, this verse does not appear to necessitate the *raj'ah*. Since the Imams were already considered Imams in their lifetimes, they do not need to be resurrected in

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[115] Hadith #119.

[116] Hadith #50, Hadith #126 and Hadith #162.

order to become Imams again. Nor do any *hadith* describe the resurrection of the oppressed *per se.*

However, these *hadith* do indicate one thing – and that is, in the early days, the theological justification for the *raj'ah* did not centre on divine punishment. Rather, it was based on the necessity of fulfilling the word of God. Additionally, while this latter *hadith* itself does not sufficiently offer a convincing purpose for the *raj'ah*, when combined with the subsequent *hadith*, it does suggest what might have been intended in the *raj'ah* prophecies.

*What Happened to Prior Peoples Must be Repeated*

In addition to calling upon Qur'anic verses, polemical *hadith* arguing for the *raj'ah* also cite a *hadith* which says that everything that happened to Bani Isra'il (or to prior peoples) must happen to the Muslims. Undoubtedly because of this *hadith*, which is also found in Sunni collections,[117] many traditional texts arguing for the *raj'ah* – from Shaykh al-Saduq on – begin by introducing the Qur'anic precedent of resurrected peoples prior. Although four *hadith* – including one 'strong' *hadith*[118] – mention it, this *hadith* from *'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha* is of particular interest as it portrays what sectarian debates over the *raj'ah* might have been like during the lifetimes of the Imams: [119]

> Al-Ma'mun said to al-Ridha (A): 'O Abu al-Hasan, what do you say about the *raj'ah*?'
> He (A) said: 'It is true. It happened to prior peoples, and the Qur'an speaks of it, and the Messenger of God (S) [said]: "Everything that happened to the prior peoples will happen to this people, sandal by sandal, arrow-feather by arrow-feather [that is to say, exactly the same way]." '...

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[117] See *Sahih Bukhari*, *Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya, Bab* 53, *hadith* #3494.
[118] Hadith #45 ('suspect'), #71 ('average'), #74 ('strong'), and #137 ('indeterminate').
[119] Hadith #45.

Although this particular *hadith* was categorised as 'suspect' on account of the final narrator (whom 'Allamah Hilli and Ibn al-Ghadha'iri call 'weak'), the *hadith* itself contains no suspicious content; on the contrary, it offers a logical argument in the style of argumentation attributed to the Imams.

Polemically speaking, this *hadith* is also one of the strongest arguments for the validity of the *raj'ah* within the Islamic discourse. More pertinently, it suggests a convincing purpose for the *raj'ah* other than vengeance, since prior peoples were not resurrected in order to be punished again. In contrast, prior peoples such as the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (*ashab al-kahf*) were resurrected to witness the power of God, the victory of truth over falsehood, and to experience freedom from oppression – which the early Shi'a were definitely living in.[120]

Combined with the prior *hadith*, which describes the *raj'ah* as a time when the oppressed will inherit the Earth, a less violent interpretation of the *raj'ah* emerges. Although fighting was prophesised, the fighting was not to be for the sake of sating one's desire for vengeance. Rather, it would be a time when the most faithful and the most faithless would be resurrected to witness the truth, and witnessing that might be sufficient earthly punishment for the faithless.

*A Cosmological Necessity?*

Finally, it has been suggested that the purpose of the *raj'ah* is none of the above. Rather, the return of some of the deceased could simply be a by-product of the reorganisation of the world before the Hereafter, at which time the *barzakh* (the

[120] The Holy Qur'an tells of several people who died and were revived, such as the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, the Prophet 'Uzayr, seventy people from the people of Moses, and Dhul Qarnayn. See *Al-Raj'ah aw al-'Awdah ila al-Hayat al-Dunya ba'd al-Mawt* (n.d.).

purgatory world) would be collapsed in preparation for the final Judgment.[121] While many souls will be sleeping during that time, the most faithful and the most faithless would still be awake and receiving either reward or punishment. Perhaps, at this time, the barrier between the *barzakh* and the physical world would be destroyed, and these souls would emerge back into the physical world. The evil – such as the Pharaoh of Egypt – would to seize the opportunity to try to regain power, and so they and their archenemies would naturally come to blows.

This idea is supported by parallel *hadith* which describe 'those who manifest absolute faith and those who manifest absolute disbelief'[122] as being awake in the *barzakh* and returned in the *raj'ah*, respectively. (Interestingly, one of the *hadith* using this phrase for the *barzakh* also comes from Sa'd in *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir*,[123] but similar *hadith* are also narrated from several other sources as well) This phrase also recurs in a *hadith* describing who believes and disbelieves in Amir al-Mu'mineen;[124] from a Shi'a perspective, those who believe in Amir al-Mu'mineen (that is, those who have 'absolute faith') would be the most likely people to return with him. It is possible that this could have been the original explanation intended for the *raj'ah* which was later sidelined in favour of more satisfying – or more comprehensible – stories of vengeance.

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[121] All credit for this idea goes to Prof. M.S. Bahmanpour.

[122] *'Man mahhadha al-imana mahdhan aw mahhadha al-kufra mahdhan.'*

[123] The *hadith* from *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* is in *Bihar al-Anwar,* vol. 6, p. 235, *hadith* #52; several similar *hadith* from different sources are mentioned subsequently in the same section.

[124] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 26, p. 257, *hadith* #33

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

After summarising his many sources, 'Allamah Majlesi concludes *Kitab al-Raj'ah* with the rhetorical question:[125]

> And so, if something like this is not agreed-upon, what can be called agreed-upon (*tawatur*)?

However, the agreement is only on the general concept of the *raj'ah* – that is, the earthly rising of some of the dead. Otherwise, the specific prophecies differ, and several can be traced to specific unreliable narrators, especially:

- 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami (Manichaean eschatology)
- 'Ali ibn Abi Hamzah al-Bata'ini and his son Hasan (vengeance against the Umayyids)
- 'Amr ibn Thabit (the *muntasir* and *saffah*)
- Al-Mankhal ibn Jameel (the Prophet as the *mudaththir*)
- Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Daylami (violence in general)
- Al-Qasim ibn Yahya ibn Hasan ibn Rashid (the return of souls to heal themselves by seeking vengeance)
- Sahl ibn Ziyad (lengthy narratives)

While these narrators appear responsible for the extant *hadith*, they probably did not coin all the inauthentic prophesies themselves since so many unreliable narrators relate so many unreliable ideas. Instead, these ideas probably emerged from a combination of factors, such as extremist (*ghulat*) and non-Imami movements;

[125] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 53, p. 123.

resentment against the Umayyid and Abbasid caliphates must have aided their spread.

However, although many inauthentic ideas about the *raj'ah* appear to have flourished during Abbasid times, reliable *hadith* about the concept of the *raj'ah* do trace back to Amir al-Mu'mineen. Therefore, the *raj'ah* does not appear to have been a later doctrinal element, as some have suggested.

While the unreliable *hadith* ('suspect' or lesser) cannot automatically be dismissed, many unreliable *hadith* display a marked difference in style and content from the reliable *raj'ah hadith*; these discrepancies flag them as potential fabrications. The most obvious markers are: a lengthy narrative style, extremist ideas (particularly, exaggeration of the status of the Imams), eschatological themes from outside the Islamic tradition, and an excessive emphasis on violence. Since these *hadith* contradict the more reliable *raj'ah hadith* – as well as each other – they should be treated as likely fabrications, especially since they were related by narrators who were severely condemned.

Of the fifty-four verifiable *hadith* ('average' or better), forty-six have been related from *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir* and *Tafsir 'Ali ibn Ibrahim*, primarily through Ibn Abi 'Umayr (to the father of 'Ali ibn Ibrahim) and Sa'd (from Ibn 'Isa and Ibn Abi al-Khattab). While these individuals and sources are considered reliable, the lack of diversity among the verifiable *hadith* does cast a shadow over their credence, for it is questionable why the authors of those two works chose to include certain *hadith* that other renowned scholars, such as Al-Kulayni, might have chosen to reject. It is also questionable why they chose to include some *raj'ah hadith* with glaringly extremist content and glaringly unreliable narrators.

After discarding the unreliable *hadith*, it can be hypothesised that the Imams prophesised that they and the prophets would be returned to life, along with the most faithful and the most faithless. Amir al-Mu'mineen is prophesised to return,

both as a commander leading the ancient prophets in battle and as the Beast (*dabbat al-ardh*) bearing the *maysam* (animal brand). However, it is not clear whether he will fight the living or the dead. The Imams will hold political power, either one by one, or in sequence, or in some other arrangement; in particular, Imam al-Husayn will rule until his eyebrows droop. The verifiable *hadith* offer no other prophesies, and even this brief narrative should be viewed with some caution, since it was related primarily through two people.

Although the surviving verifiable *hadith* predict fighting, they do not depict the *raj'ah* as a time of gratuitous violence. In contrast, the most violent *hadith* are narrated by extremely unreliable narrators and contain serious flaws in their content and thus appear to have been fabricated. In particular, the *hadith* predicting the resurrection and punishment of individuals revered in the Sunni tradition appear to have been fabricated. Thus, these prophesies cannot be ascribed to the Imams.

These *hadith* also do not present the primary purpose of the *raj'ah* as being the punishment of the enemies of God. While it is still possible that the Imams taught that the *raj'ah* would be a time of vengeance, other *hadith* suggest other explanations. According to one reliable *hadith*, the oppressed will inherit the earth during the *raj'ah.* Although, by itself, this *hadith* does not sufficiently explain the *raj'ah*, when combined with another frequently narrated *hadith* – that what happened to prior peoples must be repeated – an idea of what the Imams might have predicted emerges. Since, according to the Qur'an, prior peoples were resurrected to witness the victory of truth and freedom from religious oppression, perhaps the Imams prophesised that the most faithful and most oppressive people would be raised to witness precisely those things. While the oppressive may ultimately fall, punishment is not the goal of the *raj'ah*; rather, that will be reserved for the Hereafter. Alternatively, the *raj'ah* itself may simply be a sign of the Last Day as the boundaries between the material and the spiritual world disintegrate, and the most

faithful and the most faithless emerge back into the world to interact one last time. These are the most logical explanations which tie together the surviving verifiable *hadith* on the *raj'ah.*

## APPENDIX A: ANALYSIS OF HADITH BY TYPE AND TOPIC

Many hadith fall into more than one category, and some hadith do not fall into any of these categories. Therefore, the total number of hadith does not equal 192. The Hadith of Mufaddal has not been included in this chart.

| Type | Number of hadith | Strong | | Neutral | | Unreliable | | Indeterminate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very strong | Strong | Average or Unknown | Suspect | Unreliable | Very unreliable | Gaps | Other |
| *Tafsir* hadith | **82** | 8 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 12 | 32 | 2 |
| Polemical hadith | **11** | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 4 | |
| *Ziyarat* hadith | **16** | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | 9 | |
| Narrative hadith | **7** | | | | | 2 | 4 | 1 | |
| Return of Imam al-Husayn | **28** | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 7 | |
| Return of companions of al-Husayn | **3** | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Imam Husain buries the Hujjah | **2** | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Return of Imam ʻAli | **50** | 4 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 17 | |
| The Beast (*dabbat al-ardh*) | **24** | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 | | 7 | |

| Type | Number of hadith | Strong | | Neutral | | Unreliable | | Indeterminate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very strong | Strong | Average or Unknown | Suspect | Unreliable | Very unreliable | Gaps | Other |
| Return of the Prophet Muhammad | **26** | 3 | 1 | | | 7 | 7 | 8 | |
| Return of all the Imams | **18** | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 10 | |
| Return of the ancient prophets | **10** | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| Covenant of the prophets | **5** | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 | |
| Return of only the good or bad (not all) | **13** | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 |
| A believer must return to die and be killed | **8** | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | |
| Destroyed peoples will not return | **3** | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Vengeance on the deceased | **26** | | | | 3 | 5 | 8 | 10 | |
| Rising in Rajab | **5** | | | | | 3 | 2 | | |
| Kufa | **11** | | 1 | | | 6 | 2 | 2 | |
| Specific individuals who will aid Imams | **8** | | 2 | | 3 | | 1 | 2 | |
| Specific individuals to be punished | **11** | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | |

| Type | Number of hadith | Strong | | Neutral | | Unreliable | | Indeterminate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very strong | Strong | Average or Unknown | Suspect | Unreliable | Very unreliable | Gaps | Other |
| Punishment of revered Sunni personalities | **3** | | | | | | 3 | | |
| Return of the Umayyids | **8** | | | | | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| What happened before must repeat | **4** | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | |

## Appendix B: Analysis of Hadith by ‘Allamah Majlesi’s Sources

| Source | Number of hadith | Strong | | Neutral | | Unreliable | | Indeterminate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very strong | Strong | Average or Unknown | Suspect | Unreliable | Very unreliable | Gaps | Other |
| **ALL** | **192** | **12** | **15** | **17** | **20** | **33** | **22** | **65** | **8** |
| *Muntakhab al-Basa’ir* | **78** | 8 | 9 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 9 | 13 | 4 |
| *Tafsir Ali ibn Ibrahim* | **32** | 4 | | | 1 | 3 | 3 | 20 | 1 |
| *Al-Kafi* | **7** | | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | |
| *Amali al-Saduq* | **1** | | 1 | | | | | | |
| *Ghaybah al-Tusi* | **4** | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| *Kamil al-Ziyarah* | **6** | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | | 1 |
| *Majalis al-Mufeed* | **1** | | 1 | | | | | | |
| *Basa’ir al-Darajat* | **3** | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| *Kanz Jami‘ al-Fawa’id* | **9** | | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | |
| *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih* | **2** | | | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| *Al-Tahdheeb* | **2** | | | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| *Al-Ikhtisas* | **1** | | | | 1 | | | | |
| *Al-Misbahayn* | **4** | | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | |
| *Kitab Safat al-Shi’a* | **2** | | | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| *Rijal al-Kashshi* | **8** | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

| Source | Number of hadith | Strong | | Neutral | | Unreliable | | Indeterminate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very strong | Strong | Average or Unknown | Suspect | Unreliable | Very unreliable | Gaps | Other |
| *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida* | **1** | | | | 1 | | | | |
| *Collection of Mufeed* | **1** | | | | | 1 | | | |
| *Ghaybah al-Nu'mani* | **2** | | | | | 2 | | | |
| *Ilal al-Shara'i* | **1** | | | | | | 1 | | |
| *Irshad al-Qulub* | **3** | | | | | 1 | | 2 | |
| *Tafsir al-Ayyashi* | **7** | | | | | 1 | | 6 | |
| *Al-Khara'ij* | **1** | | | | | | 1 | | |
| *Ma'ani al-Akhbar* | **1** | | | | | | 1 | | |
| *Al-Ihtijaj* | **2** | | | | | | | 2 | |
| *Fihrist Najjashi* | **1** | | | | | | | 1 | |
| *Iqbal al-A'mal* | **1** | | | | | | | 1 | |
| *Kitab al-Anwar al-Madi'ah* | **1** | | | | | | | 1 | |
| *Manqib ibn Sharashub* | **3** | | | | | | | 3 | |
| *Misbah al-Za'ir* | **5** | | | | | | | 5 | |
| *Tafsir al-Nu'mani* | **1** | | | | | | | 1 | |
| *Tafsir Furat b. Ibrahim* | **1** | | | | | | | 1 | |

'Other' encompasses *hadith* which do not directly pertain to the *raj'ah,* which were not directly attributed to the Imams or which were otherwise indeterminate. For instance, a *hadith* about a person's dream was listed under 'other'.

## APPENDIX C: NARRATORS TREATED AS UNRELIABLE

The following narrators had no positive reports about them by any biographers (except where indicated). Names in [square brackets] are not present in the text and were inferred by the author. Names included in Arabic for clarity.

| Name | Reports | # of hadith narrated |
|---|---|---|
| Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Hamzah<br>الحسن بن علي بن ابي حمزة | **Hilli:** Waqifi<br>**Kashshi:** very weak, cursed, a liar, extremist<br>**Najjashi:** weak, Waqifi | 5 |
| 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim al-Hadhrami [al-Batal]<br>عبد الله بن القاسم الحضرمي البطل | **Hilli:** weak, extremist, Waqifi, liar<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak, extremist, liar<br>**Najjashi:** weak, extremist, liar, narrates from extremists<br>**Tusi:** Waqifi | 4 |
| Abu Jameelah [Abu Jameelah al-Mufaddal ibn Salim al-Asadi]<br>ابو جميلة المفضل بن سالم الاسدي | **Hilli:** weak, liar<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak, liar<br>**Najjashi:** weak | 4 |
| 'Ali ibn Abi Hamzah [al-Bata'ini]<br>علي بن ابي حمزة البطائني | **Hilli:** very weak, Waqifi<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** May God curse him, he is the root of the Waqifis, and the greatest in hatred towards the Imam after Abu Ibraheem<br>**Kashshi:** a cursed liar, criticised in hadith, led to false beliefs, Waqifi<br>**Najjashi:** He was Imami and became a pillar of the Waqifis<br>**Tusi:** Waqifi | 4 |
| Sahl ibn Ziyad<br>سهل بن زياد | **Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** very weak, corrupt of faith<br>**Kashshi:** weak<br>**Najjashi:** weak, extremist<br>**Tusi:** weak; elsewhere, reliable | 4 |
| 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez<br>عمر بن عبد العزيز | **Najjashi:** confused<br>**Kashshi:** Narrates despised narrations but, according to Fadhl ibn Shadhan, is not an extremist | 4 |
| Al-Mankhal ibn Jameel<br>المنخل بن جميل | **Hilli:** weak, extremist<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak, extremist<br>**Kashshi:** extremist<br>**Najjashi:** weak, corrupts narrations | 3 |

| Name | Reports | # of hadith narrated |
|---|---|---|
| Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sayyari<br>احمد بن محمد السياري | **Hilli:** weak in hadith, corrupt of faith<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak, extremist, deviated, but the two *shaykhs* of Qom praised his book of rare narrations whereas Ibn Mahbub spoke of him in his book of rare hadith because he believed in reincarnation<br>**Kashshi:** condemned<br>**Najjashi:** Weak in hadith, corrupt of faith<br>**Tusi:** Weak in hadith, corrupt of faith | 2 |
| 'Amr ibn Shimr [al-Ju'fi]<br>عمرو بن شمر الجعفي | **Hilli:** very weak<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak<br>**Najjashi:** very weak | 2 |
| Hareez [ibn 'Abdullah]<br>حريز بن عبد الله | **Hilli:** accused of blameworthiness<br>**Kashshi:** criticised in a hadith<br>**Najjashi:** very criticised<br>**Tusi:** reliable | 2 |
| Ibraheem ibn Ishaq [Abu Ishaq al-Ahmari al-Nahawandi]<br>ابىراهيم بن اسحاق ابو اسحاق الاحمري | **Hilli:** weak, extremist<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** confused, weak<br>**Najjashi:** weak<br>**Tusi:** weak, but his book is praised | 2 |
| Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Malik [al-Fazari]<br>جعفر بن محمد بن مالك الفزاري | **Hilli:** Najjashi says he is weak. Tusi says he is reliable. He narrated incredible things about the birth of the Qa'im. I do not act on his hadith.<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** a liar, his hadith are abandoned completely, an extremist, narrates from weak and unknown narrators, all characteristics of weak narrators are combined in him<br>**Najjashi:** weak, of corrupt belief and narration, and I don't know how our *shaykhs* said he is reliable<br>**Tusi:** reliable, but people say he is weak | 2 |
| Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Daylami<br>محمد بن سليمان الديلمي | **Hilli:** accused of being extremist, weak<br>**Najjashi:** very weak, extremist, liar, do not depend on him for anything<br>**Tusi:** accused of being extremist, weak | 2 |
| Al-Qasim [ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan]<br>القاسم بن يحيى بن الحسن | **Hilli:** weak<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak | 2 |
| Sulayman al-Daylami<br>سليمان الديلمي | **Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** extremist, liar<br>**Kashshi:** one of the great extremists<br>**Najjashi:** said that he is an extremist and a liar | 2 |
| Aban ibn Abi 'Ayyash<br>ابان بن ابي عياش | **Hilli:** very weak<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak<br>**Tusi:** weak | 1 |

| Name | Reports | # of hadith narrated |
|---|---|---|
| ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Asam<br>عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن الاصم | **Hilli:** extremist, liar<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha’iri:** extremist, malignant, liar<br>**Najjashi:** weak, extremist, worth nothing | 1 |
| Abu al-Jarood [Ziyad ibn Mundhir]<br>ابو الجارود زياد بن منذر | **Kashshi:** condemned in hadith | 1 |
| Abu Al-Khattab [Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab]<br>ابو الخطاب محمد بن ابي زينب | **Ibn al-Ghadha’iri:** very weak<br>**Kashshi:** condemned, corrupt of faith, weak | 1 |
| Ahmad ibn Hilal<br>احمد بن هلال | **Hilli:** extremist, condemned by Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (A)<br>**Kashshi:** condemned in hadith<br>**Najjashi:** known and rejected, condemned by Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (A)<br>**Tusi:** extremist | 1 |
| Dawud [ibn Katheer] al-Riqqi<br>داود بن كثير الرقي | **Al-Khoei:** The narrations which Tusi and Kashshi cite praising him are weak.<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha’iri:** of corrupt belief and weak in narration<br>**Kashshi:** praised in a hadith<br>**Najjashi:** very weak, the extremists narrate from him<br>**Tusi:** reliable, of sound faith | 1 |
| Al-Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Mnqari<br>الحسين بن احمد المنقري | **Hilli:** weak<br>**Najjashi:** weak, narrated strange (*shaadh*) narrations which have not been established<br>**Tusi:** weak | 1 |
| Al-Husayn ibn Hamdan [al-Khaseebi]<br>الحسين بن حمدان الخصيبي | **Hilli:** corrupt of faith, do not refer to him<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha’iri:** a liar, corrupt of faith, do not refer to him<br>**Najjashi:** corrupt of faith | 1 |
| Ibn ‘Ayyash [Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah]<br>ابن عياش احمد بن محمد بن عبيد الله | **Hilli:** forgetful and confused<br>**Najjashi:** confused at the end of his life<br>**Tusi:** became forgetful at the end of his life | 1 |
| [Muhammad ibn al-Hasan] Ibn Shimun<br>محمد بن الحسن بن شمون | **Ibn al-Ghadha’iri:** weak, first he became a Waqifi and then an extremist, do not refer to him or anything associated with him<br>**Kashshi:** a pillar of extremism<br>**Tusi:** very extremist | 1 |
| Muhammad ibn Ali al-Kufi [Abu Sameenah]<br>محمد بن علي الكوفي ابن سمينة | **Hilli:** very weak, of corrupt belief<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha’iri:** weak, liar<br>**Kashshi:** extremist<br>**Najjashi:** very weak, of corrupt belief<br>**Tusi:** extremist and confused in some of his narrations | 1 |

| Name | Reports | # of hadith narrated |
|---|---|---|
| Muhammad ibn Fudhayl [ibn Kathir al-Azdi al-Kufi]<br>محمد بن فضيل بن كثير الازدي الكوفي | **Hilli:** accused of being extremist, weak<br>**Tusi:** accused of being extremist, weak | 1 |
| Muhammad ibn Furat<br>محمد بن فرات | **Al-Khoei**: Connected to someone who has many weak hadith and is criticised in hadith<br>**Hilli:** weak<br>**Kashshi:** criticised in hadith | 1 |
| Muhammad ibn Salim ibn Abi Salamah [Muhammad ibn Salim al-Kindi]<br>محمد بن سالم بن ابي سلمة | **Hilli:** weak<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak | 1 |
| Musa ibn Su'dan [al-Hannat]<br>موسى بن سعدان الحناط | **Hilli:** weak, extremist<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak, extremist<br>**Najjashi:** weak in narrating | 1 |
| Sa'd ibn Tareef<br>سعد بن طريف | **Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** weak<br>**Najjashi:** known and rejected<br>**Tusi:** of sound narration | 1 |
| Salamah ibn Kuhayl<br>سلمة بن كهيل | **Kashshi:** condemned in hadith<br>**Kashshi:** of Zaydi-Batri persuasion<br>**Najjashi:** not Imami | 1 |
| Salih ibn Sahl<br>صالح بن سهل | **Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** a liar, extremist, there is no good in him or what he narrates<br>**Kashshi:** extremist | 1 |
| Umar ibn Furat<br>عمر بن فرات | **Hilli:** extremist<br>**Tusi:** extremist | 1 |
| Yunus ibn Zhibyan<br>يونس بن ظبيان | **Hilli:** weak<br>**Ibn al-Ghadha'iri:** extremist, do not refer to his hadith<br>**Kashshi:** extremist<br>**Najjashi:** very weak. All of his books are confused. | 1 |

Sources: All biographical information has been taken from the biographical works by the author whose name is in boldface. The *Dirayah al-Noor* software, which contains electronic versions of all these works, was used in compiling this list.

## APPENDIX D: CATEGORISATION OF THE *HADITH* IN *KITAB AL-RAJ'AH*

| Hadith | Status | Hadith | Status | Hadith | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mufaddal | Very unreliable | 42 | Very unreliable | 85 | Unreliable |
| 1 | Very strong | 43 | Very unreliable | 86 | Indeterminate |
| 2 | Very strong | 44 | Indeterminate | 87 | Unreliable |
| 3 | Very strong | 45 | Suspect | 88 | Indeterminate |
| 4 | Very strong | 46 | Very unreliable | 89 | Unreliable |
| 5 | Very strong | 48 | Unreliable | 91 | Indeterminate |
| 6 | Strong | 49 | Indeterminate* | 92 | Suspect |
| 7 | Strong | 50 | Very strong | 93 | Unreliable |
| 8 | Average | 51 | Unreliable | 94 | Unreliable |
| 9 | Suspect | 52 | Very unreliable | 95 | Indeterminate |
| 10 | Very unreliable | 53 | Average | 96 | Unreliable |
| 11 | Very unreliable | 54 | Unreliable | 97 | Unreliable |
| 12 | Very unreliable | 55 | Very unreliable | 97b | Unreliable |
| 13 | Very unreliable | 56 | Unreliable | 98 | Strong |
| 14 | Strong | 57 | Unreliable | 99 | Average |
| 14b | Strong | 58 | Very strong | 100 | Average |
| 15 | Unreliable | 59 | Very strong | 101 | Indeterminate |
| 16 | Very unreliable | 60 | Unreliable | 102 | Very unreliable |
| 17 | Unreliable | 61 | Strong | 102b | Unreliable |
| 18 | Very unreliable | 62 | Average | 103 | Very unreliable |
| 19 | Very strong | 62b | Average | 104 | Suspect |
| 20 | Strong | 63 | Suspect | 105 | Indeterminate |
| 21 | Indeterminate | 64 | Average | 106 | Very unreliable |
| 22 | Strong | 65 | Suspect | 107 | Indeterminate |
| 23 | Very strong | 66 | Unreliable | 108 | Indeterminate |
| 24 | Indeterminate | 67 | Indeterminate | 109 | Indeterminate |
| 25 | Indeterminate | 68 | Indeterminate | 110 | Indeterminate |
| 26 | Indeterminate | 69 | Indeterminate | 111 | Indeterminate |
| 27 | Indeterminate | 70 | Strong | 112 | Indeterminate |
| 28 | Unreliable | 71 | Average | 113 | Unreliable |
| 28b | Unreliable | 72 | Indeterminate | 114 | Suspect |
| 29 | Suspect | 73 | Average | 115 | Average |
| 30 | Very strong | 74 | Strong | 116 | Strong |
| 31 | Indeterminate | 75 | Unreliable | 117 | Suspect |
| 32 | Indeterminate | 76 | Suspect | 118 | Indeterminate |
| 33 | Very strong | 77 | Strong | 119 | Indeterminate |
| 34 | Indeterminate | 78 | Indeterminate | 119b | Suspect |
| 35 | Indeterminate | 79 | Indeterminate | 120 | Unreliable |
| 36 | Indeterminate | 80 | Strong | 121 | Suspect |

| Hadith | Status | Hadith | Status | Hadith | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37 | Indeterminate | 81 | Very unreliable | 122 | Suspect |
| 38 | Indeterminate | 82 | Suspect | 123 | Strong |
| 39 | Indeterminate | 82b | Suspect | 124 | Suspect |
| 40 | Indeterminate | 83 | Very unreliable | 125 | Unreliable |
| 41 | Indeterminate | 84 | Unreliable | 126 | Indeterminate |
| 127 | Indeterminate | 138-6 | Average | 140 | Other |
| 128 | Indeterminate | 138-7 | Indeterminate | 141 | Indeterminate |
| 129 | Indeterminate | 138-8 | Average | 147 | Indeterminate |
| 130 | Indeterminate | 138-9 | Indeterminate | 148 | Indeterminate |
| 130a | Indeterminate | 138-10 | Unreliable | 149 | Indeterminate |
| 130b | Indeterminate | 138-11 | Unreliable | 150 | Indeterminate |
| 130c | Indeterminate | 138-12 | Suspect | 151 | Suspect |
| 130d | Indeterminate | 138-13 | Indeterminate | 152 | Average |
| 131 | Other | 138-14 | Average | 153 | Indeterminate |
| 132 | Suspect | 138-15 | Strong | 154 | Very unreliable |
| 133 | Very unreliable | 138-16 | Unreliable | 155 | Average |
| 134 | Very unreliable | 138-17 | Unreliable | 156 | Unreliable |
| 135 | Very unreliable | 138-17b | Unreliable | 157 | Unreliable |
| 136 | Indeterminate | 138-18 | Unreliable | 158 | Indeterminate |
| 137 | Indeterminate | 138-19 | Unreliable | 159 | Other |
| 138-1 | Other | 138-20 | Other | 160 | Other |
| 138-2 | Indeterminate | 138-21 | Very unreliable | 161 | Indeterminate |
| 138-3 | Unreliable | 138-22 | Indeterminate | 161b | Suspect |
| 138-4 | Average | 139 | Indeterminate | 162 | Indeterminate |
| 138-5 | Average | *: Indeterminate due to ambiguity regarding primary narrator | | | |

## APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

| Conclusion | Criteria | Predictions |
|---|---|---|
| Likely to have been prophesised by the Imams | • Supported by at least one *hadith* categorised as 'average' or better<br>• Not in conflict with established teachings of the Imams<br>• Not in conflict with other verifiable *hadith* | • The return of Imam Husain to rule until his eyebrows droop<br>• The return of Amir al-Mu'mineen, as both a commander and the Beast (*dabbat al-ardh*)<br>• The return of the pre-Islamic prophets to fight under Amir al-Mu'mineen<br>• The return of the Prophet Muhammad<br>• The return of the Imams to hold political power<br>• The return of the most faithful and the most faithless<br>• Destroyed peoples will not be returned<br>• What happened to prior peoples must be repeated<br>• The oppressed inheriting the Earth during the *raj'ah* |
| May or may not have been prophesised by the Imams | • Not supported by any verifiable *hadith* ('average' or better)<br>• Not contradicting verifiable *hadith*<br>• Not containing obvious signs of falsification | • The return of the companions of Imam al-Husain<br>• Imam al-Husain burying the Mahdi<br>• The Beast stamping the faces of the believers and the disbelievers<br>• The return of the Prophet as a political ruler<br>• The return of the Prophet to participate in battle<br>• The believers must 'die and be killed'<br>• Return of the Umayyids |

| Conclusion | Criteria | Predictions |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Paranormal events surrounding Kufa |
| Likely to have been falsely ascribed to the Imams | • Not supported by or contradicts reliable *hadith* ('average' or better)<br>• Mentioned in 'unreliable' or 'very unreliable' *hadith*<br>• Related by narrators identified as extremists or as corrupting *hadith*<br>• Associated with one specific unreliable narrator<br>• Obvious signs of non-Islamic or extremist (*ghulat*) content<br>• Content which conflicts established teachings of the Imams<br>• Content which conflicts with the grammatical structure of Qur'anic verses | • Imam Husain's speech to his companions in Karbala about the *raj'ah*<br>• Re-enactment of the Battle of Siffin<br>• Re-enactment of the Battle of Karbala<br>• The return of the *muntasir* and the *saffah*<br>• The Prophet slaying the Satan<br>• All things separating into their true forms during the *raj'ah*<br>• The return of 'Abdullah ibn Shareek al-'Amiri as a commander for the Mahdi<br>• Isma'il ibn Hizqayl requesting to be raised in the *raj'ah*<br>• Return of individuals revered in the Sunni tradition<br>• Verses ascribed to Amir al-Mu'mineen about a rising in Rajab<br>• *Hadith* about vengeance |

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